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CASANOVA
ADVENTURER & LOVER



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GIACOMO CASANOVA

*From the portrait by his brother, Francesco Casanova, in the Daschkof Collection
at St. Petersburg*

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CASANOVA

ADVENTURER & LOVER

BY JOSEPH LE GRAS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY A. FRANCIS STEUART

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

TRANSLATING M. Joseph Le Gras' study, called now "Casanova: Adventurer and Lover," but in French "*L'extravagante personnalité de Jacques Casanova*," has been a work full of delight to the translator, but whether it will be so to the reader is another matter.

What I have attempted only in my translation is to give the meaning of the author who has studied so deeply in the *Mémoires* themselves, and yet curbing somewhat to the English curt taste the exuberance of his Gallic analyses.

But in Britain very little is as yet known about Casanova. The immortal *Mémoires* are too little studied, though they rival in many ways those of Benvenuto Cellini. *Soit* puritanism, *soit* bad translation, few current copies exist in England, and the British fail to know his extraordinary history, adventures, and romances. These are not all certain, for he was not only an autobiographer and a novelist, and it is possible that some of his stories as he tells them did not happen to himself, but were pure *nouvelle*. But apart from that, where does one get a better account of the eighteenth century than in his *Mémoires*? Being an Adventurer he did not meet only the courtly set like Horace Walpole, but every one from king to gambler,

from Madame de Pompadour to *grisettes*. He is therefore the best mirror of his age. If anyone who reads this book will only go further and study the *Mémoires* on which it is founded, he will get to know Giacomo Casanova, Venetian, a man of genius, a fascinating scamp, and the eternal type of the adventurer of all time.

A. F. S.

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NOTE BY THE ENGLISH PUBLISHER

We are indebted to the Paris publishing house of "La Sirène," and to the Editor, Monsieur Raoul Vèze, for permission to reproduce five of the illustrations in this book. They are selected from the magnificent series which embellishes the fine scholarly edition of the *Mémoires* now being issued by that firm, and which every one interested in Casanova should possess.

INTRODUCTION

THE CASANOVA OF THE "MÉMOIRES"

JOURNEYING in a comfortable carriage, of which the *fourgons* are abundantly stocked with provisions, pies and wines ; a girl on his knees, another sometimes by his side snuggling lovingly near him, we see Giacomo Casanova, Adventurer. Richly dressed with cravat and sleeves made beautiful with fine lace, his pockets full of precious timepieces, chains tickling his waist-coat, fingers brilliant with rings, pockets lined with gold and his knees encased in fine silk stockings ; calling with a loud voice for the best horses at the Posting Stations, the finest room in the Inns, chucking his purse to " mine host " and departing from the Inn in an atmosphere of curtseys and gratitude ; so appears to us, we are apt to regard this as a too conventional picture of the state of our Adventurer, Casanova, at the time of his splendour. He goes to a town drawn by his interest or fancy. He knows the gaieties and the scandals of it at once. Two days later he takes his own part there. Eight days afterwards he occupies the public eye. He enters, he knows how to please, and he pleases. He has a fine appearance, knows who he is, is easy, has assured manners and address. Like all worldlings, he is excellent in the art of concealing his imperfections

and only shows his faultless exterior. A student of men and clever at the science, he bestows a compliment or flatters with delicacy, according to the capacity of the person he addresses. He speaks well, and not unworthily on the most difficult subjects, literature, philosophy, sacred or profane history, theology, theosophy, pictures, finance, science, sociology, the art of war, navigation, religion and Women ! He knows, better than anyone, how to make himself indispensable, to organize a pleasant party, to give a splendid dinner, to write a sonnet, to lose a large amount at play, gracefully, and better still to win it. Once admitted into a family, he becomes the friend of all and the confidant of all. He is civil to the husband, makes love to the wife, will marry the daughter, chucks the maid under the chin and kisses Grandmamma's hand ; but you must understand he does not go where he doesn't get some slight benefit out of it. He is munificent, obliging, and very generous, but it must be known. He waits on great men. He recommends himself to Ministers, and appears at Court. That, however, is not the simple Casanova, it is the Chevalier de Seingalt, in short, a great person, at least he seems so, which to himself is the first thing that matters.

But if we follow him, we see him in a different condition, garments poorer, linen reduced, pockets empty, and himself hungry. Pale, hollow-eyed, he has the wan look of those that seek the windfall of a meal, or else are stuffed with the fatness of a newly released prisoner. He lives by expedients, by strange evasions ; hiding among shadows, ear cocked, eyes cast down, and shod with velvet. Everything unknown is to him disturbing, all around he sees

spies, and his world is peopled with *Sbirri*, bullies, *Alguacils*, sheriffs' officers, recorders, magistrates, and gaolers. Driven from pillar to post, in disrepute, and hissed as he is, he goes from place to place. By chance it is by highway, by the suburbs or the taverns, eating the bitter bread of poverty with the sudden interruptions that audacity, insolence, or effrontery bring him. Never does he tire, never does he cease to watch for good luck. If his star begins to shine again, one turn, and the Wheel of Fortune will remove him from his rut in the mud, and again permit him to soar to a destiny more happy, or at least more brilliant.

These were the two poles of his existence. Between the two extremes he experienced every degree. His life was a game, his Goddess, Chance. He always trusted to her and did everything to attract her favour in his own interests. Bold, courageous, full of self-trust, of quick wit and fertile imagination, unbridled, free from prejudices and especially with no scruples, he is the consummate type of the Adventurer.

And to Adventure his whole life was dedicated. Nothing turns him aside from it. He is able to escape from the prison of the Piombi and knows how to escape from the Galleys, the Gallows, and Assassination. For more than fifty years, in every way, in spite of all or against all, he knows no motive but the satisfaction of his appetites, his ambitions or his passions, and God alone knows how forceful these are! He pursues his personal ideal of happiness, his own conception of Life, his whimsies and his follies. And he follows this with an extraordinary tenacity. He travels throughout Europe,

from Madrid to St. Petersburg, from London to Constantinople, becoming intimate with some great men, and is able, thanks to them, to converse with Frederick the Great, Joseph II., Catherine II., to be noticed by Madame de Pompadour, to have a discussion with Voltaire, and to make the Pope laugh. In the intervals his chief society is composed of sharpers, thieves on the grand scale, gamblers, Abbés of dubious repute, hungry poets, comedians, and cheats. Now rich now poor, but always seductive, he is the friend, the lover or the adviser of women of all kinds, great ladies, citizen's wives, nuns, peasants, actresses, dancers, go-betweens, those who lived by their own chances, fresh or damaged. He threw gold about with lavish hands, and then stole for the wherewithal to eat. That quickly pulsating life, given to us in the *Mémoires*, forms an extraordinary romance of adventures where one meets the most wonderful dénouements, the most unexpected Apogees, the most highly coloured episodes, cheek by jowl with anecdotes in turn the most delightful or the most profligate.

For Casanova lived in an epoch which united every contrast, the second half of the eighteenth century, at the same time courtly and wild, the most refined and yet the most unrestrained of modern history, made up of unreal ideals and violence, of sensibility and savagery ; of the grace of wealth and of hardness of heart. Casanova embodies everything of that epoch. It was his lot to frequent the most opposite poles of Society, to mix in worlds of the most different aspects, and to go from country to country the least like each other. In a word to live with every kind of being. So he is thus to us an

unsurpassed guide. He takes us to the *Coulisses* of the Italian Opera of Louis XV., to the very worldly-minded Venetian Convents, to the Spanish Bull-fights. We go with him from the Vatican to the Palais Royal, from the pleasure gardens of Constantinople to the wine shops of Holland. He had seen all, tried all, knew all.

And all that he has seen and felt he places before us with a wonderful intensity. We follow him and he makes us live in this vital atmosphere, now in a gambling hell, where the silence is only broken by the calling of the stakes and by the clinking of the money; one sees on the faces of those present, the impassivity of those winning, the fixed look of the losers. Suddenly voices break in, quarrels arise, and marked cards and loaded dice are challenged. Again, in a French garden, there is a *fête galante*, one is going to Venus's Island, where fair ladies clasp and unclasp the arms of lovers with sighs or smiles. Later on we go with him "*Aux Délices*," the Court of Voltaire and see the corps of worshippers under the high tyranny of Madame Denis, flatter and offer incense to the wizened old man, chuckling, wire-pulling, full of importance and passions. Let us advance a few paces and we find the clash of the duellists. Swords—a few more, and one is in the gay throng at a masquerade, at the toilet of a pretty woman, or else the scene of a Cabbalistic Séance. All these scenes burn with life, with vivacity, with colour. We are whirling in an eddy with a varied and lively crowd, where different peoples meet, mingle and jostle: Kings, ministers, courtiers, financiers, cardinals and the fry called Abbés, begging friars and fat canons, princesses, actresses, courtesans,

magicians, butlers, vagabonds, lawyers, robbers, whether in the Courts or at the Tables, a carnival throng where one recognizes many persons known to history. Casanova is the first among them all, he moves about, he is everywhere. Always ready as a lover or for an adventure, for an action of dubious honesty, but also for one of kindness.

He is of the universe and nothing about him is dull. He interests or amuses us ; he pleases us above all by his spontaniety, his love for pleasure, his zeal, his assurance and his undoubted originality. His power of attraction is such that, even more than a century after his death, he conquers us as in his lifetime he conquered so many of his contemporaries. In spite of his manifest and many sins, we forgive him because he shows real qualities of heart and feeling. In short, he is a Prodigal Son who knew how to make all love him. The epigram of Marivaux about Voltaire rises to our minds : “ That beggar has one vice above the rest, he sometimes leans to virtue’s side.”

Such are, as represented (1) the man, and (2) his surroundings. The one is by no means an Apostle, and the second sometimes shameless. It is true that Casanova, like most writers of the eighteenth century, sometimes moralizes about the worst sins, but when he does so he mocks. We see that thus he sins twice. For in addition to his bad deeds he has a lively pleasure in recounting them and so lives again when telling us about it. So that although the word Virtue is often written in the *Mémoires*, we, in reading them, do not discover it there. Books are not written of necessity to render us better, and this one less than most. We find in it, however,

pleasure and interest. "Each reader," says Sainte-Beuve,* "reads according to his own humour and imagination rather than by his judgment, and thus, what is well told, pleases, even though what it narrates is ugly, as long as the writer, the first enthusiasm of writing it down being over, does not go on to embroider his theme."

But is the Casanova of the *Mémoires* the true Casanova? It is very difficult for us now to separate the true and the false, the exaggerations from the truth of that variegated career.

The *Mémoires* themselves, the principal source of our information, must be studied continuously. Casanova deceived his contemporaries in his lifetime too often to hesitate to do the same to posterity, at least sometimes. It is also true that he wrote his book in his old age at a time when he fancied that his work, if it was ever to be read, would only be read after his death. But though he affected much cynicism in avowing some of his sins, he takes a great deal of trouble to diminish, to narrow, to conceal or to be silent about some of the irregularities of his life. He shows too much vanity to give up placing himself as a central figure where he was only subordinate. On the other hand, the scenes he recounts were already in the far past, and their vision in his memory had often been dimmed or often altered by his impetuous information which was self-suggested and self-believed. In fact, as if the events had really happened as he wished they had. Moreover, the *Mémoires* are incomplete, they end with the year 1774, twenty-four years before his death. But also they are themselves incomplete

* Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries de Lundi*, v. 238.

and the author has been careful to tell us this: "One will not find in these *Mémoires* all my adventures, I have left out those which might displease persons who took part in them, for they might have appeared badly" * (Preface, p. 13). There is no doubt that he counted often on the number of these individuals.

The works of Historians and Archivists on the subject of Casanova are already many and increase in number every day. Some have shown us many adventures about which our Venetian preferred to remain silent. Others have been able to do no more than to dish up, according to taste, certain passages of the *Mémoires*. Others in turn are attempting to go to facts and show that if Casanova sometimes dealt lightly with them, he was also sometimes very truthful, clear in his judgments and well informed about the events of his time. Unfortunately, these critical studies do not touch on more than certain epochs of his extravagant career, and on some of his anecdotes and personages mentioned in the *Mémoires*, they are insufficient to reconstruct in all entirety the life of the Adventurer. It will be essential still to have researches followed by many fortunate discoveries to find by that channel a definite result. It is therefore impossible at the moment to write a complete life of Casanova.

But, let us be honest, what interests us in the narrative is not the historical certainty, it is the story, that happy-go-lucky novel, both voluptuous and picturesque. It is the brilliant presentment of society or the customs he knew. Does it matter if

* The passages of the *Mémoires* cited are from the Flammarion edition, in six volumes.

Casanova was at Constantinople, at Corfu or at London on the date he states ? or if he was with the Abbé de Bernis in very curious circumstances ? or whether he has exaggerated or invented parts of certain narratives ? Had taken such or such a voyage, or loved such and such a girl ? He did not play, really, any serious rôle in politics, literature, philosophy, science, or the arts. What is really of interest to us is the way he lived and saw others live. We wish still to feel with him, to live with him, to feel his soul, to be initiated through him into all the vices, the virtues, the prejudices, errors or truths of his own time. Looking at the question from this point of view Casanova as a historical being is lost in the human being, and the *Mémoires*, with all their errors, intentional or involuntary, contain more real truths about the eighteenth century than all the MSS. and documents in the Archives. Brunetière says, "The novel, especially if most romantically written, is often nearer than one thinks to the reality of the manners of its time !" *

It is, then, as a Human Type that one studies Casanova. He ought to be placed with Panurge, Scapin, Gil Blas or Figaro, and he offers much more attraction from the point of view of psychology and social customs than from that of biography.

To understand and appreciate him it is not necessary to analyse or ponder over all the histories of his loves, his gamings, or his magic, nor to follow him step by step in the romance, partly fantastic or partly true, which he has woven and left for us. It would launch us in difficulties of opinion to attempt

* F. Brunetière, *Etudes critiques sur l'histoire de la littérature française*, vi. 251.

a precise documentary precision and would be quite deprived of interest. But about all his anecdotes, his lies, we can find out the probable truth, compare them with what we do know of the Adventurer's career, and of that amalgam of dubious truths and real truths, make the real Casanova appear.

And it is worth while.

To form our idea of him true, we must follow our hero in the different epochs of his life to understand in what circumstances his personality was formed, developed, became firm, struggled, relaxed, and compressed. It will then be possible for us to observe Casanova as himself, to make sure of his carnal and mental nature and to see through his own successes his captivating personality without ever forgetting his ups and downs from pedlar to nobleman in tinsel. At last, we will take the Adventurer by surprise in his most ordinary attire, the most characteristic of his deeds, his loves, or his travels, and we shall see by this way his soul, his vices, virtues, errors, and illusions.

And thus, perhaps, we can again restore to that being whose ashes have been scattered for so long, a little of that feverish life full of pleasure and extravagance, the life he loved so passionately.

CASANOVA
ADVENTURER & LOVER

CASANOVA

ADVENTURER AND LOVER

THE DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF HIS PERSONALITY

"Raised by his genius above human judgments, he left to ordinary mortals the merit of a dull and quiet life."—LA BRUYÈRE.

I

HEREDITY—EARLY INFLUENCES

"I feel before I think; it is the common lot of humanity."—J. J. ROUSSEAU.

IF one can believe the *Mémoires*, the remote ancestors of Casanova showed early the spirit of adventure and an errant genius. Sprung from an Aragonese bastard, and having left Saragossa in the first part of the fifteenth century, they wandered slowly, urged on by the caprice of changing fortune. Sometimes they mixed in the coteries of Grandees, exploiting their favours as often they fled into exile as a consequence of their misdeeds. One, in Spain, carried off a young nun and married her later in Rome when the Pope had released her from her vows. This one killed in a duel an officer of the King of Naples and fled, and some years later sailed with Christopher Columbus to the discovery of America, but died during the voyage. A third assailed Giulio de Medici, the future Pope, with his pen. Antonio fought against Henry of Navarre,

afterwards King. One sees the woman, the pen, the voyage of discovery, and the excitements and the varieties of career. This explains almost all the traits of Casanova who sprang from this exciting family.

His father, Gaëtano, seems, on the other hand, a being at once comical, impulsive, and weak. In 1715, when nineteen, he left Parma and his family, to follow an actress, La Fragoletta. For love of her he became a dancer and comedian. But this great passion, like so many others, could resist neither frivolity nor inconstancy. Gaëtano lost the lady, but remained in his profession. Some years passed. In 1723 he was among the actors in the Theatre of St. Samuel, at Venice. He seemed to be taciturn and passed his spare time in his own room. Opposite was the stall of Farusi, the leather-worker. This worthy man, while plying as a shoemaker, enjoyed his family life with his wife Marzia and his daughter, the charming Giovanna, called familiarly Zanetta. In Southern countries doors and windows are always open, and the family life is all in the street. The melancholy actor and the pretty Venetian were able easily to exchange glances and, later, lovers' vows. But to the honest shoemaker and his wife an actor was "an abominable man." They would have thought it a come-down to accept him as a son-in-law. Then, one fine day, the lovers ran off, and demanded from the ecclesiastical authorities a marriage blessing, which it would have been difficult for them to refuse. This was given on February 27, 1724. Old Farusi died of it, and Giacomo Casanova was born next year, April 2, 1725, in the beautiful city of Venice.

The income of this young couple was small. Either by vocation or by necessity, Zanetta did not delay long to follow her husband into the theatre. She made her *début* in London in 1726, and during six years the couple led the wandering life of strolling players. Unhappily, during a visit to Venice, a disease of the brain struck down Gaëtano, who died December 18, 1733.

In his description, none too restrained, Giacomo tells us that his father distinguished himself "more by his behaviour than by his talents." He was "known to be of a superior position" and that "he had some knowledge of mechanism." It appears that he softened his vexations and the inferiority of his position by some scientific studies and by a liking for learning. In spite of a ruined life, he had possessed a kind of personal zeal and a knowledge of self-respect in which he found solace. He was both a little ridiculous and a thought touching, a strolling player with a soft heart, who, leaving the theatre, "works at optics," and who when on tour carried about with him in the midst of his player's motley, his pedigree! His life ended too early to have exercised any influence on the character of his son, but the latter inherited something of his passion as lover, his intellectual activity and breadth of view which made him superior to the ups and downs of Destiny.

The mother of Casanova exhibits a much more notable personality. It is cunning, intelligent, wily, practical, intriguing and without any superfluous scruples. Malicious gossip* said that during one of her tours to London she captivated King George I.,

* Charles Blanc, *Histoire des peintres*.

and that Francesco, her second son, born in 1727,* was the fruit of their love. Having become an excellent actress, she went from theatre to theatre and from success to success, in spite of the needs of her many children.† The children did not trouble her much. After their births, when she recovered her figure and activity, she reappeared always more brilliant in her new rôles. A widow at twenty-six, "she refused the hand of all those who sought to marry her," and continued her career. Next year found her engaged at a theatre at Verona, where she played with Imer, the actor, in a musical interlude by Goldoni. "She was," the latter writes in his Memoirs, "a widow, very pretty and interesting, who played on the stage in the rôle of *jeune amoureuse*. She did not know a note of music; however, she had good taste, a good ear, and acted perfectly." An engraving in one of the Venetian editions of the works of Goldoni shows us exactly the portrait of Giovanna Casanova. She is a tall woman with large features, but with a slender figure and attractive look.

Even the theatres of second rank were not enough for her ambition. She lived some time at St. Petersburg with an Italian troupe, recruited for the Empress Anna Ivanovna. Then, having left Russia at the end of her contract, she sought fortune in the form of the Elector of Saxony, Augustus III., King of Poland, interested always both in comedies and in actresses. He engaged Zanetta for life for

* He was baptized June 1, 1727.

† After Giacomo and Francesco she bore successively Giovanni in November, 1730, Faustina in December, 1731, Maria Magdalena in December, 1732, and Gaëtano (a posthumous son) in March or April, 1734. All, except Francesco, were born at Venice.

the Dresden theatre. Thenceforward she did not leave that town. Although advanced in life, she continued to play the rôle of *jeune première*. Her height, her features marked with age, even under paint, made it difficult, but the delightful vivacity of her acting and the singing charm of her elocution riveted to her the favour of the public. She died in 1776.

From his mother, both frivolous and selfish, Casanova certainly inherited the art of pleasing, the desire always to get on, the spirit of intrigue, the gift of entering without hesitation and without preparation, but with success, in enterprises of which he was ignorant of the very rudiments, the carelessness of his responsibilities and duties, and this driving force allowed him to play to a late age the rôle of *jeune premier*.

But if these hereditary predispositions are real, it must be that it was in Casanova's blood, not from the example or influence of his parents. Family life was to him an unknown quantity. His father and mother did not come to Venice but at long intervals and for short visits. They had many more pressing cares than to brush up a dirty little boy, so he retained a memory of their indifference made bitter by spite: "As for my parents, they never spoke to me" (i. 22). They thought it sufficient to see their progeny well lodged in a house in the district of Saint Samuel and to entrust them to the care of their grandmother, Marzia Farusi.

She was a true Venetian: simple, ignorant, and superstitious. She owned, however, a proud nature, real sagacity, and the healthy judgment of that artistic and wise people. She pardoned her

daughter's escapade. She knew that in Venice love ruled all, therefore she was not astonished when that fantastic god disturbed her own family. Perhaps she saw, moreover, that her actor son-in-law was not such a bad lot. Anyhow, her position as mother once gone, she became an admirable grandmother and bestowed upon her grandchildren the whole kindness of her nature. Giacomo was her pet, her "beloved," for in his early life the adventurer was delicate, unhealthy, bloodless because of constant nose-bleedings which left him feeble, fearful, and as if sobered by presages of an early grave. The good grandmother showed the tenderest care of the poor little waif. To cure his illness she did not hesitate to employ other means than that which surpassed dull official science by all the prestige of its mysterious power. She placed the child under the incantations of a witch. Nay, more; she allowed a separation between her grandson and herself to give him good air. Still she watched on him from afar, made sacrifices to make him stronger, was proud of his early successes, and shut her eyes to his many peccadilloes. She understood, loved, and doted on him. And her dear Giacomo did her justice. Their love was the one pure affection of his life. Later, he always remembered his old Granny Marzia with love, gratitude, and respect.

But the delicate childhood of Casanova did not limit the devotion of the good woman. She awoke the interest of an important personage—Baffo, a noble. It was he who advised her to send Giacomo to Padua where the air was more bracing and healthy. It was he, moreover, who seems to have been the first to see the intellectual qualities of his

young *protégé*. He supervised his progress and encouraged the commencement of his real instruction.

Georgio Baffo, last scion of a patrician family, learned, wise, influential, had clear sight and a kind heart. But in himself he had many contrary qualities. His generous nature was hidden under a harsh exterior like a ripe fruit under a hard rind. He was frightfully ugly, with squinting eyes under enormous eyebrows, a sad, long nose, thick lips half open, as he breathed with difficulty, always suffering from headaches, sunken, short-necked with the round throat of the short-winded, of ascetic look and captious mien. So, at least, he is revealed to us in an engraved portrait which dates, it is true, from his old age, its surroundings garlanded, according to the taste, with roses and beribboned laurels and with coats of arms, making his portrait still less pleasing. One sees in a cartouche the unexpected quotation :—

“*Carmina non prius audita musarum Sacerdos
virginibus pueris que canto.*”

In short, the man with the evil face was a votary of Love and one of the most indecent of poets. His verses, collected after his death, make four volumes in which dirt, amours, love, and pornography mingle. It seems, however, that these matters were kept apart from his life, and only appear in his writings. Almost all of his biographers state that he talked like a maiden lady, but thought like a satyr. It is unlikely that at the time when he was specially interested in young Giacomo, that is to say, about his fortieth year, Baffo was always discreet in his speech. It is unlikely also that in

the dissolute set in which he moved, the poet never read some of his poems in the presence of a little boy whom no one paid any attention to. One sees the impressions of the last, and he realized both the joy of fame and the glory of literature. Anyway, it is an interesting occurrence that the most shameless of poets should have been the protector—almost the godfather—of the most outspoken of autobiographers.

A little-known father who died early, a mother seldom present and always preoccupied about her own affairs, a too kind grandmother, and a cynical protector; these were the first guides of Casanova in morals and conduct. It is very probable that the orphan existence determined much of his character. Nothing, or at least very little, came to interrupt his will or his likings. He did as he pleased and began to think. He learned the taste for freedom, the faculty of initiative and the habit of relying on no one but himself in the vicissitudes of life.

By the advice of M. Baffo, Giacomo was sent to school at Padua. His mother, who chanced to be at Venice, took him there. The child was given a meagre outfit, his surveillance was arranged, and he was put in charge of a Slavonian woman, who had other boarders. His mother gave him some advice, kissed him, and left him. "That was how I was got rid of," he writes, and we see him more an orphan than ever, at the age of nine.

Perhaps it was lucky for him, in a way, that the ugly old Slavonian combined neglect with rapacity, that her house was filthy, and that he had to fight there with "the three kinds of bugs," that he suffered such hunger that he stole salt herrings, sausages, and new-laid eggs, still remaining, despite them,

“like a skeleton.” These hard times stimulated his energy and strengthened his nature. He perceived that it is silly to bear annoyances and exactions, and that it is good to claim, to protest, and to affirm one’s rights. He was not wrong. M. Baffo and his vigilant grandmother arrived on the scene. He left the house of the Slavonian in triumph and went as a boarder to that of his teacher, the Abbé Gozzi.

This was one of the best of men. Timid but prudent, retiring into the background in all things, he lived doing the best work of his nature, teaching grammar to little boys. He avoided all which could trouble the quiet of his mind and soul, but, on the contrary, he “loved a soft bed, a glass of wine, and his family life.” This last consisted of his mother, an old peasant who worshipped him, his father who tiddled, and his sister Bettine, a tomboy of nineteen, the prettiest girl in the quarter, very advanced already, and promising to be more so. A true paradise for the little Casanova! At Dr. Gozzi’s he felt at ease, he could let himself go, laugh, work, take his place at a good table and sleep in a clean bed, and also begin an intrigue both naïve and complicated with Bettine. Extricated from this, in the robe of an Abbé, pampered by his teacher of whom he became rather the friend than the pupil, his knowledge of himself became more fixed and his personality expanded.

It is necessary to note this: as in later life he became so high-spirited and a man so full of passion, yet had wanted love, or rather that he required round him a loving circle. It is not a dominant trait of his nature. There is therefore in it a trifle

generally ignored. He detested those who knock you down whether for your good or in your interest, and he hated those who cavilled at him, in exact proportion to his sins.

On the other hand, he was overcome with gentleness and kindness. The Abbé Gozzi knew these admirable means. Giacomo thus gained spontaneity and nobleness. He also gained the belief that all intellectual work was a pleasure and not a tiring labour.

His progress was rapid, like that of clever children who begin their lessons late. He easily got beyond and outdistanced his fellow-scholars. In a very short time he became *décurion* of the school, that is to say, the assistant of the Professor. The latter taught him all that he knew—a little vague and none too much—as well as to play on the violin. But this curriculum, a mixture of Latin, Greek, Grammar, prosody, of some philosophy and many errors, was not sufficient to quell the feverish curiosity of the zealous learner. Already he read every kind of book, especially scandalous ones, which by no means escaped his eye. This zeal tired the quiet Abbé Gozzi. He had to meet incessant questioning, unexpected explanations, long discussions, where his pupil's logic beat down his old-established principles. The Abbé lifted his hands to Heaven. Nothing, however, discouraged his interrogator, burning with youthful fervour. He showed at this time a reasoning clear and shrewd, a great ability to learn and understand, and a lively wish to fascinate and astound.

When his classical education ended, he entered, a little against his wish, the Law School. He

became one of those who frequented the famous and ancient University of Padua. He was free; he abused his freedom and sowed his wild oats. He had left the hands of the Abbé Gozzi pretty virtuous, in spite of the lessons of Meursius,* and of the more practical ones of the pretty girl Bettine. But he had lost nothing by waiting. He reveals himself most in his worst moments, as gambler, drunkard, loose-lover, blustering, intolerable and putting into practice the wild spirits which characterized the whole of his life. His good grandmother, frightened, seized on him, took him from these scenes, and brought him to Venice. He continued there his Law studies, but other studies, as one will see, as well. What is the chief thing from his point of view of his mental development, is that after he left the Abbé Gozzi, he insisted in reading, in working, in educating himself in Venice as at Padua. Wine, women, and liberty he used and abused, but at the same time he had the wit and the wisdom to put pleasure in the second place and learning first; a noble perseverance in cultivating his memory and his intelligence, a real desire for truth and beauty. What he tried at this period was his ideal all his life.

So it was. Still young, very learned in many subjects. Mixing in a hodge-podge where others might have been quite lost, Boccaccio and Ariosto

* He was responsible for the following works: *Aloisii Sigeæ. Tolerantæ Satira sotadica de arcanis amoris*, *Aloisia hispanice scripsit, latinatate donavit J. Meursius*. The second edition, increased, carries a shorter title, *J. Meursii Elegantie latini sermonis*. This pornographic book is probably by Nicholas Chorier, a French writer (1612-1692). There were many editions of it from Grenoble, Geneva, and Amsterdam. Meursius or Jan van Meurs was a Dutch linguist. His son Jean de Meurs, called the younger, was born at Leyden, 1613, and died in Denmark in 1654. He was also a linguist, and it was Chorier who fathered on him the book we speak of.

with geometry, Petrarch with dogmatism, Martial, Plautus, and Terence with theoretical and experimental physics, light verses with those of an opposite kind, mathematics with history, the law at which he worked as a student with the magic which he studied secretly. At eighteen he knew Horace by heart and declared he could not live in a country that had no good library. He had a very adaptable mind, and a very prodigious memory. His literary, philosophic, and scientific equipment was much superior to that of his contemporaries. Unhappily all his life the bent he acquired in this hasty superficial study. He was always a little superficial. Under a brilliant wit he preserved a bookish mind. His opinions and even his paradoxes were not truly original.

Shortly after he returned to Venice he was tonsured, and the Patriarch gave him minor orders. Casanova an Abbé! In embracing such a career, the young man neither experienced a religious vocation nor resolved to reform. He simply wished to get on and to provide for his future. One can imagine that he did this in line with the advice of the shameless but clear-sighted M. Baffo.

For so isolated a youth, it was in effect to put himself under the protection of the Church, the most powerful influence in the world. What else could he hope for in Venice? On the one hand there were the Patricians, a close corporation whose privileges gave them every important post in the public service, commerce, and the great banks. There was nothing there for a Casanova. On the other hand, there were the poor people and the shopkeeping class who vegetated in mediocrity and in petty

employments. This he did *not* wish, moreover his genius, his natural gifts fitted this young man of interesting appearance to have a future in making himself distinguished in the Ecclesiastical world. He therefore at the beginning was a *poseur*. Moreover, he hadn't yet adventured very much, for the Minor orders were comparatively remote from the Priesthood. When one received them, one took, it is true, the title of Abbé; but this only meant that the recipient was a member of the Ecclesiastical machine. He had not pronounced any solemn vow, lived like his fellows, could aspire to civil employment, and even marry. This position gave many privileges and exacted few obligations. So it appeared to Monsieur l'Abbé Casanova. Immediately he adapted himself to this rôle. He cast off the look of the rakish student. He is now a young cleric, full of wit, of worldly wisdom and prepossessing, eloquent, well dressed, his hair carefully crimped and scented, in short, a kind of Cherubino in his especial habit, of whom women were fond, by whom already the jealousy of both his equals and his superiors has been excited. He was now fifteen.

He took himself very seriously. It was one of his characteristics during his life, that he attached a great importance to his most silly enterprises and to his worst dreams. He was for a moment so good, so serious, that, after a series of love passages of which he came out a conqueror, he did not hesitate to occupy the pulpit at a religious *festa* and to deliver a sermon * which he says was a great success.

* Do not be surprised by the inconsistency. This is one traveller's story: "In a church (at Rome) after an Oratorio executed with all the decoration of lovely music, a child of *eight* or *nine* years old, in clerical vestments, was placed in the pulpit to preach to the congregation. This

About fifty sequins and a harvest of love letters were his guerdon. This brilliant beginning intoxicated him. He saw himself soon as a world-renowned preacher.

His wishes grew with his vanity, especially as he made some useful friends at Venice who could help him. M. Baffo we know of already, the brothers Grimani, noblemen and rich, who knew all about the theatrical and amusing circles. Mme. Manzoni, wife of a notary, full of indulgence, kind and devoted to him; and above all, M. Malipiero. He was an old Senator, cunning, fond of good fare and of women, who had retired from public life to pass his later years in full enjoyment of them. His caustic wit played among scandalous stories and things of dubious merit. In his palazzo he gathered round him daily a group of scandalmongers of good birth who were either men of talent who talked well, or women with histories who could hear anything. They exchanged news, made their comments on things of the day, unearthed the latest scandal, talked of the theatre or politics, criticized, tore the absent to pieces, chaffed and had a good time. M. Malipiero had in a way chosen Casanova as a *protégé*, and had him about him. So now our young Abbé was often in a Senator's patrician house enjoying the receptions and the hospitable board. Amusing his protector by his wit and his good appetite, helping at his evening receptions, discreet, far-seeing, picking up a fan, handing a chair, showing by his experienced look and by his intelligent eyes that he fully understood a story told by a garrulous

little priestling would have surprised you with his assured air, his pathetic voice and his gestures. These prodigies perhaps were shown to verify 'Ex ore infantium et lactentium præfecisti laudem.'—Abbé Coyer, *Voyage d'Italie et de Hollande* (Letter of March 26, 1764), i. 279.

old fellow, leading ladies to their gondolas with low bows, and kissing their hands. Was it not a school for him, that Salon which embodied Venetian social life? What a godsend to become familiar with clever women and with influential men who became interested in him by the grace of his manner and his distinction! He rapidly improved in this early period of his life.

But his great teacher was Venice herself. She was the city of wealth, of pleasure, of love, of easy-going life even to licence. After their long voyages, the dangerous expeditions, the struggles and fights in the far-off East, sailors and soldiers had come back to view the town, thinned by privations and unrestrained in morals. For months or years in the midst of storms, of fatigue, of strife, of blows and violence, in which they very often saw themselves near Death itself, they lived with the fixed idea and for the happy day when they would again land on the jetty of their own city. And when they did, their joys were so numerous and so thorough that they wiped out the memories of the hard times they had gone through.

Looking forward to new expeditions and other adventures they got drunk, and in their virility painted the town red with the experience gained in the four quarters of the world. Venice received them with smiles. She had every indulgence for the brave men who brought her her glory and her riches. She understood their passions, their outbursts, their luxury. "Many shameful and improper scenes take place on the Piazzo of San Marco under the Portico of the Church itself" is a statement in a repressive Act of the Grand Council in

1315. But it remained a dead letter ! Another decree of 1360 states that it is indispensable for the town to have sufficient courtesans ! * The cup of pleasure, which was nothing but the relaxation of conquerors, became the right of those they enriched. At the Renaissance, the City of the Doges, rather even than Rome, became the centre of the world's riches. Their grand fêtes, their extraordinary pomp, their wealth in velvet, brocade, lace, precious stones, magnificent buildings, pictures, sculptures, that orgy of colour which strikes the eye, that sensuousness which dazzled with their pride and glory and made the Venetians seem like demi-gods. When their decadence came these glorious surroundings diminished, but the vivacity of the city remained. Venice was less powerful, but more lively ; she became more brilliant and more receptive. The gaiety was no more the truculent or the more healthy gaiety of their ancestors in the Middle Ages. It was without the wonderful culture of those of the Renaissance, but graceful if unhealthy, elegant, but with a perverse elegance. To represent the life in Venice in Casanova's time, one would not need the candid masterpieces of Gentile Bellini and Carpaccio, nor the wonderful decorations of the pictures of Veronese. One sees it better in the little pictures of Pietro Longhi.

In the city, everything is amusing and frivolous, gondolas ply fast towards the point desired and leave a joyous track. Carelessness and pleasure reign. The theatres—a vast number—are never empty. A new piece is more discussed than a Treaty, and a popular actress has more consideration

* Charles Diehl, *Vue République patricienne* (Venise).



VENICE IN THE XVIII CENTURY
"LE DÉJEUNER DE LA COURTISANE"
By Pietro Longhi
Reproduced by permission of "La Strène," Paris

than a prince. In the Piazzo of San Marco acrobats, jugglers, charlatans, strolling musicians, and hawkers of small wares all plied their trade. Gambling was an affair of State, the lottery a material event of which the mob passionately awaited the result. In the Churches themselves, vanity was shown, and the services became an opportunity for love passages for Giacomo to smile at or to admire a pretty girl. Venice in the eighteenth century was, in fact, the courtesan of Europe. Foreigners knew this, and enriched and increased her bad morality.

The city of so famous a past, which defended herself against barbaric invasion, which saw the proud Barbarossa humbly kneeling under the portico of San Marco, which was held in respect by the armies of the Austrian emperors, those of the French kings and the Spanish princes, who baffled Genoese greed, Florentine perfidy or Roman intrigue, and who cajoled the Turk, had been herself conquered by pleasure. Love had become her supreme master, her king and her law-giver, and a curious one at that. The patrician fell before the gondolier's daughter, and the adventurer made love to the great lady. Love resembled that thin mist which sometimes rises from the lagoons and canals, and, enveloping the whole city, penetrates into the most secret and impenetrable of places, even into the closed rooms of private houses. This veil of mist descends on wharves, bridges, palaces, domes, and bowers, making them all invisible. A subtle haze, impalpable, almost unreal but unconquerable. Love had become the universal preoccupation. Not fierce, burning romantic love, but the love whose passages amuse and please, light, frivolous, and sensual.

Sometimes swords were crossed, and sometimes there were strange disappearances among its participants, but these dramatic incidents were rare. Women were regarded only from the standpoint of love, and this love which began as sport and became cynicism, meets us at every turn. The mother sold her daughter, the young wife turned from her husband to her lovers. The noble saunters by and hears a stranger quoting his wife's price. Nuns themselves are in the world of Gallantry.* In spite of their cloisters they have tender passages with young nobles or with young monks, and it is for them a point of honour to be faithful to their gallants! They were the best among the lights-o'-love. "In truth," said Président de Brosses,† "it is to nuns I should incline my steps if I was residing here." All this was admitted, and had so much become a part of the life of the city, that the scandal of the daily life was forgotten and passed almost unnoticed.

This was the atmosphere which the young man Casanova grew up in, and these were the daily scenes under his notice. The impression made on him became indelible. His careless and brilliant life, his versatile love affairs, his dissolute and amused point of view were formed at this time, as his Ideal, and he pursued it as long as and wherever he lived.

At this time, his position, his intelligence and knowledge seemed to promise well both then and for the future. To his title of Abbé he soon added that of Doctor,‡ by defending two theses before

* *Les Italiens ou les Mœurs et Coutumes de l'Italie*, translated from the English by M. Baretti, p. 221 (Geneva, 1773).

† *Lettres familières*, i. 223.

‡ No one has found these theses among the archives of Padua University. Could he by chance have assumed the Doctorate as he did later the title of Chevalier?

the University of Padua: the one on Civil Law "*De Testamentis*," the other in Canon Law "*Utrum Hebræi possint construere novas Synagogas*." He was well placed, lived with good company, and lived in a good house, which his mother still rented. All smiled on him. If he pleased old ladies, he had also successes with the young. He was a fine young man, ready for any adventure or pleasure, good-looking and sympathetic. Unfortunately, there came a series of unfortunate circumstances which completely changed the happy beginnings of his luck and altered with sudden brutality his whole career in life.

II

UPS AND DOWNS

“My Lord, I am born to be the plaything of fortune.”—*Gil Blas*, vii., Chap. I.

THEN the grandmother died. She was the only person to whom he was attached with the link of true affection, and the only one who wielded any authority over him. Thanks to her he had learned to master, within certain bounds, the tumultuous crowd of his evil instincts. When this guardian-angel left him, Casanova delivered himself to all the tempests of a temperament unbridled from this time.

A short time afterwards, he received a letter from Dresden. His mother told him that one of her friends, a monk, Bernard de Bernardis, had been made, through her influence, Bishop of Martirano, in Calabria. She was eager to recommend her son to him. Then he, by the aid of the Prelate, would advance more easily as an Ecclesiastic. She made other arrangements in regard to her younger children, and this done, decided no longer to keep on her house in Venice.

Then a curious adventure happened, and, disagreeably, ruined him in the eyes of M. Malipiero. This old gentleman valued above all three young girls. At the moment two were his mistresses. He

occupied his leisure by superintending their education, one learning music, the other dancing, intending them for the theatre and waiting for fortune. The favourite, Thérèse Imer, was an adorable minx, who, under the direction of her mother, once an actress and now a dealer in love, got the most out of the noble Senator. Casanova found her very much to his taste, but kept within bounds. One day, however, when his Excellency had gone for his siesta, he found himself *en tête à tête* with the fair Thérèse. A tender episode began, but suddenly, when things were beginning to be interesting, a volley of strokes from a cane fell upon the shoulders of the young curious. Alas! his Excellency had not rested! So there was an end of Thérèse Imer, of the Senator's receptions and his dinners, of the pleasant society which met there; in fact, he had to say goodbye to all his dreams and his good fortune.

He was now alone, without a home, unprotected and without cash. Under this stress his real self leaped out. It was necessary to live and to find some money. Unhesitatingly he sold for his own profit all that he could of his father's furniture, regardless of his brothers and sisters. The Abbé Grimani, the zealous guardian of the children during the constant absence of their mother, was troubled. The lawyer, Razetta, intervened. Casanova rode the high horse. They shut him up in a seminary, he made them expel him; they shut him up in the Fort of S. Andrea, he escaped one night for some hours, thrashed Razetta, broke his nose and three teeth, and having thrown him into the canal, fled back to sleep in his prison-fort and arranged an admirable alibi. All the mockers were on his side,

and he was soon released from his captivity. That is the true Casanova, and in his best vein. Ingenious in adversity, elusive when doing wrong, tenacious in hatred, a furious, violent, indomitable and an incommensurable liar.

However, to have stayed in Venice under these conditions would have been to renew the struggle between the pot of earthenware and that of iron. It was best to seek fortune elsewhere, to see what could be done in the Calabrian Bishopric. So he left to join at Rome his future protector.

The true adventures and journeys of Casanova really commence here. His personality had formed little by little under different streams, but the Grimani-Razetta incident brusquely brought to the surface his dominant traits. Now, free from all shackles, he abandoned himself to his destiny. "*Fata viam inveniunt*" he had learned, and very recently, too, from M. Malipiero.

He made a bad start. In a few days he had lost the sequins in his purse, and the clothes in his trunk, at play. The chance of an unfavourable wind took his passage boat to a poor little port in Istria. He found himself unknown to all, without anything of his own but an illness gained one knows how. To escape hunger and thirst, he became entangled with a Mendicant Friar, Fra Stephano, a low rogue, an arrant ruffian, filthy both body and soul, both grumbling and insolent, cunning yet simple, ignorant, idle, a glutton, drunken, a cheat, thief, and even assassin. Such a cynic that he arrived at being without conscience, the type of the religious Bohemian, those gowned men of bad habits of whom the vices and the dirt have always excited in every age the

laughter or indignation of our ancestors. Despite his repugnance, Casanova was reduced to become the accomplice of this pleasant travelling companion, to live by his earnings, begging, mendacity, and thieving. A hard school after the sweets of life at Venice. Happily, our adventurer, already a true sportsman, knew how to hold his own with a cudgel, a decisive argument against the Franciscan.

At last he got to Rome. And there was disappointment! Bishop Bernard had already gone off to his Bishopric. What was he to do, having but scant resources? Martirano is far to the south-east of Naples, beyond Cozenza, almost at the end of the peninsula in the midst of the Calabrian hills. What matter? His place is paid in the coach as far as Naples. The rest of the way he will make on foot, if need be, putting in use some of the means he had learned from Fra Stephano. His whole hopes rested now on that Calabrian prelate, "Bishop by the Grace of God, and of the Holy See, with the help of my Mother." He would see him, was he at the end of the world. Whatever it cost, he wished to rise from his low degree, not to be a beggar any more. He wished to achieve *fortune*. This fixed idea, this bravery which overcame obstacles, his lively desire to attain the most difficult end, the furthest off, by any means, that burning determination to show himself superior to all circumstances and to capture luck, was in great part a characteristic of his personality. Later, the Adventurer employed that force very often. But the first time he used it was on one even now anonymous, he met on his journey from Rome to Martirano.

And he was successful, for, as he says, at Portici

he met a rich Greek merchant, who amongst other wares had a large quantity of mercury. Our intelligent traveller remembered that the mercury of commerce contained, in large or small quantities, lead and bismuth, and if one increased the proportions of these ingredients prudently the visible aspect of the mercury would still remain the same to all appearance, though the amount—and consequently the selling value—would greatly increase. So Casanova laid his plans, talked the Greek over, experimented, discussed, refused, then yielded. In short, the clever manipulator extracted from the foolish merchant the price in real money for his adulterated mercury, given too with thanks and presents. This “very clever conduct” was the first example of his luck. One may say “The Greek was very simple,” but where is the scamp who does not find his master, especially when one offers him a new scheme for robbing others? So it was in a decent vehicle that Casanova went his way to present himself to the Bishop of Martirano. Now, however, was a new disillusion, a desolate land, a Bishop with no money, attended by only one miserable manservant and a maid of canonical age, a dilapidated palace, a meal which frightened him, a hard bed, a flock of yokels, no pretty girls or books, no prospect of gaining money or of passing his time tolerably. It did not take long to make Casanova renounce Calabria and his Bishop, his clergy, and all the fine hopes that he had cherished.

And here we see a new and important side of his character emerge, his ease in ridding his mind of the hopes on which he had staked much when he saw that their realization was not worth his while. He

could in a moment change his whole point of view when he saw what he had fancied was improbable. He suddenly reversed his plans after many struggles and fatigues. It had taken him a long time to get to Martirano, but finding it a poor town in a poor country, with a poor Bishop with poor revenues—off! Faster! That poverty did not suit M. l'Abbé Casanova, a man of talent, resource, and wit, who was entitled to comfort, women's petting, society, and a brilliant future. In his pocket he felt the comforting weight of the money he had got from the Greek. It is a quick change. When that money is exhausted it will, perhaps, be necessary to look out for another dupe.

A short but delightful residence at Naples followed. There he made friendships in the High world; then came a journey of delight, in which his good looks, his distinction and his audacity won him favour in the sight of the charming Donna Lucrezia, his first serious conquest, and then we find him in Rome, attempting assiduously to push his way among great men in the Pontifical Court. He trusted greatly to his talents and cleverness to get in "by the great footway of the Church" where the poor influence of the Calabrian Bishop could never have pushed him. "I knew that Rome was the one town, where a man with nothing could get everything. This idea renewed my courage, and I must say that unbridled self-appreciation forbade me to mistrust myself and added greatly to my confidence." (i. 223.)

And he seemed to be likely to realize his hopes. Well received, furnished with a Secretarial appointment under Cardinal Acquaviva, noticed by the

Pope Benedict XIV. himself.* He climbed with prudence, dividing his time between his work, his own studies, his entry into Society, and his love affair with Donna Lucrezia. At once he became a politician and learned to look where the wind blew. Full of cleverness and foresight, bowing with a smile, behaving with that polite and false servility which pleased his superiors, he manœuvred the difficulties of a clerical society. By his intelligent docility to his protectors, his deference towards the old Cardinals, his exquisite urbanity and tenderness towards their mistresses, he gained the esteem and goodwill of all. But a scandalous story—concerned with a secret love affair (another's) and an elopement in which he found himself mixed up (with the very best intentions, he asserts)—obliged him to leave Rome, having assisted, once again, in the sudden ruin of his hopes.

But this time he has money and good letters of recommendation. He went to Constantinople! A good job! He might as well have gone to India. All the Roman world began to disgust him. So re-embarking, he went to Venice.

A tempestuous voyage it became, as in the Casanovian way love affairs mixed themselves up with adventures and dangers. One day, a definite point, his trunk was lost, and in it his clerical robe as Abbé. Why should ever he don it, once it had been cast off? After his mortifications in Venice,

* Portrait of Pope Benedict XIV. (in 1740). "He is of a height a little under medium, fat, healthy, his face round and full, jovial in expression like a pleasant fellow. He is frank, regular, of bright wit, and pleasant. He converses agreeably and freely, sometimes broadly, though his habits are strict, and his morals perfect" (Président de Brosses, *Lettres familières*, ii. 385). "Benedict XIV. was learned, very amiable, and loved amusing conversation" (Casanova, i. 249).

in Martirano and Rome, did he want any better opportunity of leaving the clergy? He came into the midst of stalwart soldiers, the Spanish and Austrian Army, who were in their winter quarters. He saw the camps filled with movement, quick but disciplined. He has met patrols, has been arrested by a sentry. He has seen officers. Sovereign masters whose lightest word is a command, at whose good pleasure one may be imprisoned or released, and whose life is passed in daily gaiety, forgetful of the past, in gambling, mess, love-making, and parades. Is it not a pleasant existence? Yet at the same time, one night he heard some bullets whistle past, a brave sound, short and hard as a snap of the fingers, in a rhythmic whispering which soon dies or ends in the noise of their ricochets, a strange noise, enigmatic, scarcely perceptible, but terrible as the break of Destiny itself. A shocking sound, which carries in its brevity all the dangers of suffering and all the mystery of Death. What good would it have been after having received the baptism of fire, to wear the humble robe of an Abbé in disgrace? So it was in a brave uniform, with sword at side, and cockade in hat, that Casanova appeared when he re-entered Venice.

Once more his character went with the clothes he wore. He had left the "robe of humility" to wear the "uniform of honour." He became obstinate, susceptible, touchy, and more than ever vain. Having bought a commission of Ensign in the Venetian garrison at Corfu * he joined his unit by

* No document confirms Casanova's claim to the position of officer. He appears, however, to have visited Corfu. Could it have been, as M. Aldo Ravo hints, that he went there in the Galleys?

passing through Constantinople as one attached to a mission. A young officer, expert at gambling, occupied with love affairs, and not imagining for a moment that the military career might be able to be conformed with the cult of pleasure or of self-respect. With this idea, seized by a desire for advancement, and as he had not, no doubt on account of his freaks, obtained in twenty months the rank of lieutenant, he gave up hope of his commission, and returned to Venice.

Still, he had to live ! He attempted the Law for an instant as clerk to the Advocate Marco Lezze, but soon left that position "through loathing." * Now on his beam ends, he remembered his violin-playing when with the Abbé Gozzi. They accepted him, giving him a slender salary in the orchestra of Sto. Samuel. A needy life in the depths, where he became, according to his own confession, a perfect scamp.

For some years past, Casanova had passed through a period of groping. Seeking his course, but never finding it. One must not forget the difficult beginnings and repeated set-backs in understanding the wildness with which he tasted later the joys of life. He had given up successfully the medical profession to which, for a moment, he felt himself drawn, and from legal employments which his studies might have given him. His attempts at an ecclesiastical career had disgusted him for ever with the soutane. To wear it he had need of a humility, a self-sacrifice he could not rise to. Soldiering was distasteful to him, and his spirit of initiative

† *Histoires de ma fuite des prisons de la République de Venise qu'on appelle les Plombs* (Réédition, veuve Moquet, Bordeaux, 1884, p. 11).

there would always bring him into trouble with his superiors. In every career, moreover, whatever it might be, the commencement is difficult, and if one wishes to rise in it, one must be content to rise slowly. All his attempts had been unsuccessful. No occupation appeared to suit his wild spirit. His talents did not allow themselves to be walled up in an occupation, or frozen in a professional attitude. He seemed, in spite of his real brilliance, to be destined to a knotless thread. Yet, suddenly he found his career.

He played the violin at a rich marriage. When tired, he left the orchestra and went out. Before him walked a Senator in a splendid red gown. A letter fell out of his pocket. Casanova picked it up, running after the great man, and gave it to him. In gratitude the latter offered the former a seat in his gondola. Scarcely had they pushed off from the land when the patrician was struck down by an apoplectic stroke. Casanova took him home, woke up a surgeon, was his assistant in blood-letting, installed himself as the nurse of the sick man, called a doctor, judged his methods dangerous, and continued his own, which were wise because they relied on nature. Saw the health of the Senator grow better, allowed that he was the mascot, and gained the thanks and the intimacy of the noble Venetian.

This was Zuan Bragadin, a scion of one of the oldest and most powerful Patrician families. He was then a man of fifty. He had withdrawn from public life and interested himself chiefly in questions of the Life Beyond. The two friends of his heart, the Senators Dandolo and Barbaro, shared his tastes. Practising all their religious duties—no doubt to

save their faces and as a blind—they were intimate with heresy and indeed with cabbala. They had that turn of fancy which made them see mysterious forces direct the most ordinary facts. They interpreted the known by the unknown, and believed with a blind trust in the intervention of occult powers into our very ordinary life. The incident which had brought our Adventurer at the right time to assist, and, as they thought, to serve M. de Bragadin, seemed to them a supernatural one. Could this fiddler with the doubtful appearance be the Emissary of the Good Spirits? Casanova saw his chance. He immediately seized the situation and showed, insisting quietly, that he, a humble mortal, had effected a cure where official medicine was powerless. Then, putting all he knew of magic, sorcery and cabbala, he recounted the past, narrating their lives to the three friends. He prophesied their future, and enwrappt in Sybilline words the difficulties of the present. And as the trio were astonished at so much clairvoyance, as well as so much knowledge in so young a man, he told them he knew of mysterious secrets into which he had been initiated by a hermit. It was impossible to reveal this knowledge under pain of death, but he could do good by it to his friends.

So he became master of the situation. M. de Bragadin was persuaded that he owed his life to him. In gratitude and from the desire to have him near him, a faithful friend, and an interpreter of the Powers Beyond, he wished Casanova to stay in his palazzo, living at his expense, his servants to wait on him, with a gondola of his own, and plenty of pocket money—in fact, as an adopted son.

MM. Dandolo and Barbaro agreed in this. They embraced, they vowed staunchest friendship, and Casanova, assured of all the necessities of life and more, had nothing to do but float in these enchanted days, having only one obligation, namely, to tell any happy adventure he might have to the credulous Senators.

III

METHODS OF RISING

"Dupin put two tables for each class he reckoned.
The clever, bright, and strong were always at the First,
While the lesser fry sat eating what was over at the Second."

LA FONTAINE.

YES, he had found his career, that kind of line which his taste fancied, and his genius also. He carried it on henceforth with more or less show and success during the course of his long life as an adventurer. He did not at all want to be enrolled in that list of men who, be it by necessity or by profession, belong to the public, serve it and amuse it. He belonged, rather, to the class who live their own lives and amuse themselves. The life of a lord? Assuredly! But in the middle of the eighteenth century it was not necessary to be born a lord to try to live in that fortunate style. The real nobles lost their prestige day by day. The zeal for luxury, for state, carelessness and incompetence led them to ruin. Many great families, swamped with debts and reduced to the greatest straits, could not keep their heads above water, but by selling their offices and begging for benefices and pensions. Society had already been levelled by this continual drop of the old families, and the sudden elevation of those until recently unknown. In the displacement and disorder which took place



se. des des fins. Madame la Marquise de Pompadour. *J. Watson fecit.*
Morte En 1764.

F. Boucher pinxt.

J. Watson fecit.

MADAME LA MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR

throughout the whole of Europe, anyone could make a position who pushed and knew his ground. The new people of this hour rose sometimes from the most ridiculous origins.* Everywhere there was a mixture. A gold-laced coat, ornaments, and galloons meant as much as a great pedigree. An unknown with a proud address, might be a duke, but also a sharper. So sprang from an obscure shade into the light, and deluged the world with luxury and power, La Pompadour (*née* Poisson), the real "King" of France, who chose Ministers, arranged alliances, directed warlike operations, dictated treaties, and spent the King's Revenue as a personal possession. Soon there was born in Arras Maximilien Robespierre, who, when he left the provincial Bar in a humble capacity, became Supreme Dictator. Soon after also there arose in Ajaccio, a thin, unknown young man, but destined to arrive at greatness. More than before fortune belonged to those who would seize it. There stood on one hand the timid and indifferent who let things go on, living in the old-fashioned way, but who, at Venice, at Paris, and at Vienna, sank in the coming cataclysm. On the other hand, there were the intriguers, the active and energetic minds, who used the ruins of the old régime as a jumping-

* One day M. Poisson, father of Madame de Pompadour, being at dinner with a great number of financiers, after a gorgeous dinner, when excited by wine, laughed madly, and said: "Do you know what makes me laugh? It is to see us here surrounded by luxury and servants. A stranger would think we were princes. You, M. de Montmartel, are son of a tavern-keeper; you, M. de Savalette, of a vinegar-boiler; you, Bouret, of a footman; myself, who forgets?" Having said this he went on to take it out of his other guests, and this done he went on to say that every one not only was low born, but most owed their fortunes to the worst and most illegal origins (*Mouffle d'Angerville, Vie privée de Louis XV., publiée et annotée par Albert Meyrac, Calmann-Levy, 1921*).

off ground, and sometimes as a pedestal. However, about 1750, the hour had not yet come for unmeasured ambition and excessive realization. The old society, before its terrible convulsions and its death struggle, dreamed only in its last days of having a good time with love, frivolity, and ease of life. With a little agility and boldness anyone might rise to this careless happiness, and this was the ideal of Casanova. He had no possessions. This was lucky. A fortune, lands, house, a profession, a family, would have been obstacles to his liberty. A nuisance and an everlasting clog. Like the old sage, he carried everything on himself. No reverse could take from him his boldness, his energy, his talents, his genius for intrigue, his youthful power and vigorous health. This was a capital of the best kind, and what happened allowed him to lay it out well. Nay, more, when one wished to seem a brilliant gentleman of ease, one has to have the means of spending money without seeming to think about it. Moreover, the monthly sum of ten sequins* which M. Bragadin promised him was not enough for his sportive needs. He needed more money. Gambling would doubtless provide it! "Play is in full swing in Europe," wrote Usbeck to Ibben in the *Persian Letters*. "It is a position to be a gambler. It takes the place of birth, of work, of honesty, it puts the person among respectable men without question, though every one must know they often deceived, but it is acknowledged to be incorrigible." † As a fact, play was

* "The sequin was worth twenty-two livres of Venice, and eleven livres and fourteen sous, eight deniers of France" (De la Lande, *Voyage en Italie*, vii. 79).

† Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes*, letter lvi.

everywhere. It was one of the dominating passions of the time, a habit, a need, and an institution. Much has been said about the salons where they conversed, but those in which one gambled were infinitely more numerous. With kings and queens, with princes, great nobles, merchants, adventurers, they gambled in hotels, in taverns, in the back parts of shops. It was a mania. "One cannot now enter a house without being asked to play. The ladies say to a man who does not gamble, that he is a useless piece of lumber, and the cavaliers pay no attention to ladies who do not play. Even the most passionate lovers leave their rendezvous for the gaming table." *

Play satisfied the craving for adventure, the taste for fighting and spoliation which had descended from primitive man. In this civilized epoch it gave it a home, for without leaving one's chair one could feel the emotions, the excitements and the surprises which filled in less settled days the ordinary course of life. It was an unwearying struggle, where every fault told, and implacable duels had tactics varying with circumstances, with feints, boldness, engagements, and ripostes, as personal initiative allied itself with blind chance. Play excited a bitter conflict where each player attempted by his own wit to overcome the eternal changelessness of destiny.

This close relation to fortune suited the very enterprising character of Casanova. With him the passion for play had its influence on his passion for women. By possession itself love may be tired, whereas play offers situations always new, attractions

* Mme. Du Noyer, *Lettres historiques et galantes*, ix. 40.

always full of life, and often extraordinary results. "This passion was engrained in me. To live and to gamble were both to me the same thing" (ii. 465). He possessed, moreover, the principal qualities of a gambler—zeal, sangfroid, clear-sightedness, and decision. The adventurer, however, did not always consider play only as an agreeable pursuit. He saw in it other advantages and his own good. "One does not find," said La Bruyère, "in distinguished and successful gamblers the least trace of their original condition. They lose sight of their former friends and become *grands seigneurs*. It is true that the luck of the dice or the cards sometimes replaces them where they started." So the occupation so dear to Casanova served as a spring-board to rise in the world, to live with nobles and the rich on equal terms. It was risky certainly. Chance, being a blind goddess, strikes, sometimes, those whom she has favoured before. Then it was necessary to know how to guide the goddess by the hand into more propitious ways. This was the art of the professional gambler. He needed "to know how to lead fortune as he played to his own advantage either by calculation or by dexterity, but independent of luck." "I believe that a clever and wise player can always do one or the other without being blamed or accused of cheating" (i. 342). This sounds like an elegant periphrase. . . . To cheat neatly and well, cannot be called cheating. So thought the greater part of those persons who careered about Europe gambling with all their wits, of whom we see the crafty faces shown in many a page of the *Mémoires*. Under these attractive exteriors these professional gamblers, a black band, and without any appearance of

it, put to the sack and stormed the great cities. When their "cleverness" became too obvious or when their dupes began to complain, they disappeared, and went to try their ingenuity and skill elsewhere. These gentlemen corrected luck with so much care and skill that chance hardly counted as far as they were concerned in the dealing of cards or the throws of dice. If they lost it was because they found themselves against one more clever than themselves. So, very often, therefore, instead of continuing a useless struggle with him, they became partners to the great detriment of the uninitiated and the foolish.

This was the ordinary attitude of Casanova. When partnership seemed to him preferable to any other action he did not hesitate to join his interests to those of the most notorious sharpers, and especially with Antonio Croce, "a great gambler and expert in correcting evil fortune." The victims destined to be plucked were preferably drawn from among rich foreigners attracted by Madame Croce. The latter was a very pretty woman, charming and agreeable, who, by her flirtations, her elegance, her humour, her charm, and also most likely, for more solid reasons, brought her admirers to the gaming table. There the two partners did their best. "Croce cut almost to dawn, and we divided 1600 sequins. We played again next day and Gilenspelz, alone, lost 2000 sequins and Mendex, the Jew, lost 100. Sunday was sanctified by a slackening, but on the Monday, the bank gained 1000 sequins" (ii. 347). Nay, more, if the police made a raid, every one put their stakes hastily in their pockets. Croce played and Casanova seemed busy with something else.

Thus by giving "wise maxims about games of chance and ruining those who gave themselves to them," the Adventurer found his purse always filled for his needs. It was the first step to becoming a great man.

However, in spite of the advantages of play, one had only to win within bounds, one had to lose from time to time. The cards gave their adherents a reputation always a little dubious. Moreover, it was not sufficient only to equal in luxury and pleasure a company of idle persons, it was necessary to surpass them, to show some point of superiority, indisputable and striking, to put oneself on a high and unrivalled pinnacle where no one could equal one. This superiority Casanova found in his practice of occult knowledge.

This had always been a subject which attracted him. His first remembrance in life was associated with a mysterious scene of which he was the terrified subject in the cave of a witch at Murano. Later, when with Doctor Gozzi, when his little friend, Bettine, gave herself up to a thousand extravagances, he was greatly impressed by the arrival of a Dominican exorcist full of quiet dignity, and asserting that if he willed it the devil would obey him. Certain persons pretended then to command the Supernatural Forces! All his life Casanova remembered the Witch of Murano and the handsome Exorcist of Padua. Besides his success with Bragadin, Dandolo, and Barbaro, the trio showed him what wonderful profit could be drawn from magic to exploit the weak. The exercise of Cabbala became the best way to make a name, and, even more than gambling, a delightful way of getting money.

However, he did not aim at once at the sublime. He did not pretend either to the heroic enterprises of a Saint-Germain, nor to the theatrical charlatanism of a Cagliostro. He did not surround himself with mystic metaphysics as did Saint-Martin, and did not aspire to visit Heaven, Hell, and the Spirit World or the far-off planets in the manner of Swedenborg. Not at all. He was neither a theorist nor a dreamer. He had no desire to appear as a visionary. His aim was to live a worldly life, filled with real and tangible pleasures. He only plied magic when begged to, and appeared never to exercise his skill unless to oblige his friends. "I am," he says in substance, "a good fellow, a man of the world; you will see me always ready to flirt with the ladies, to make up a party of pharaon and eager for any dinner party. But, though I don't seem so, I am an exceptional being, I have extraordinary relations with the Spiritual World, and I manipulate an oracle of much docility. Thanks to this last I can tell your fortune, know the hidden intentions of your foes, and can gain for you the favour of your genii. It is easy for me to show you my power and my knowledge. If either are useful to you I put them at your service as we are such friends. If not, do not speak about them any more." The genius of Casanova was to have utilized his dubious secret knowledge for practical purposes, and to conceal his charlatanism under a disguise, smiling, clever, and profitable. This was his ordinary procedure.

In the society which he frequented, when not gambling, when one had spoken sufficiently about Paris, London, or Naples, when the subjects of

conversation were exhausted, one amused the ladies by tracing magic squares, or interpreting pyramids of figures, gave in short oracular answers, and trifling, unveiled some pleasant secret which was already a secret to nobody. It was simply an amusement to pass the time. Just as the sharper gets round his public and fascinates it before taking its money. But one fine day you found that the Oracle spoke of an Event which no one seemed to know, and unveiled an idea hitherto held secret. Then little by little the trifling turned to seriousness and the pastime became a science. What kind of a man was this Casanova? They went to consult him on important enterprises, about the future, to ask his Oracle about fortune or health. And he, a clairvoyant of the highest kind, guarded his reputation and never compromised it, knowing how to prophesy vaguely or clearly as circumstances tended, preserved his tone that it was a game or surrounded himself with all his machinery of a magician to suit the character of the enquirer whom he was fooling, and the result he was gaining. He knew the art to say to his Genius the words most agreeable to the secret wishes of his dupes, and at the right moment, he was inimitable in putting off, in ambiguity, and in uncertainty. In short, he always relied for his greatest glory on his Oracle, and by it the advancement of his own future. It was by practice of the Cabbala that he obtained his highest successes and his greatest gains as an adventurer.

This all seems so paradoxical in this century of philosophy and science. Not so much so as it appears at first sight. For new ideas are never

accepted at once, and they provoke greater or less reactions. The eighteenth century, which boasted clear thinking and logic, fell, on the other hand, under the fascination of the mysterious and unknowable. As it were, the human mind cannot understand everything, and shows this always by some weakness, and the desire for the marvellous is one of our mental weaknesses. In Casanova's time the most of the educated minds, to say nothing of lesser degree, were enthusiastic in their ideas about free thought. It was fashionable to pass for "philosophic," that is to say to show an enquiring mind on every occasion. But though these intentions seemed worthy their realizations sometimes fell far beneath them. For, whereas Theology affirms the highest Truths *à priori*, Science is more prudent in its assertions, incomplete in its knowledge, and advances with a more slow and hesitating step. Therefore, it is not given to every one to acquire the true scientific outlook, and more especially those who leant that way in the eighteenth century could not but be pioneers. They did a lot in directing thought in the right way, but it was impossible for them to bring about alone a new outlook on human knowledge. Thus this young science, so bepraised, but still so fragile, did not find itself always ready to answer wild and difficult questions. Those questions which were asked about the world beyond, to the curious questions which trouble much, having their solution in the unknowable. So those who desired to know, and who would not accept the solutions given by religion, and were not able to wait for those of science, fell into every kind of hypothesis and extravagant belief.

In a similar case, "It was not science that failed to answer their questions, it was that the mass of human beings did not know enough. They wanted definite answers to most difficult questions, for dubiety hurt those minds which wished a reply, though they could not have understood it without special study. The marvellous drew them naturally, and they allowed themselves to fall under the influence of personages and doctrines which satisfied their crying needs of believing, of being astonished, of agreeing. One might have thought that when in these moments of eager impatience, they woke certain of their old idols, that they had made a great step in the way of progress in renouncing their blind superstition. But one soon saw, alas! that the worship had changed its object rather than its nature, and that it soon came together again to worship a new deity." *

That is why, in the eighteenth century, that era of rationalism became also an epoch of mysticism, of illusionism, of magic and enchantments. Then sceptical men and shrewd women, who believed themselves freed from prejudice and error, had not yet gained that serene maturity which makes one consider all problems with calm criticism, and knows how to reserve true judgments. Having decided to reject the authority of the theologians, they fell into the hands of charlatans and sorcerers. These emancipated but too clever intellects were forced always to be seeking a new idea. The most confused questions did not stop them. They solved it at once, explaining one mystery by another. This need to believe, shown so ingenuously, did not

* Gilbert Ballet, *Swedenborg*, p. 221.

confirm the solidity of our most praiseworthy achievements. The Encyclopedia became the new Bible. But everything was not explained by the Encyclopedia, and the unexplored domain of the supernatural seemed fertile in promises; one fell on it with might and main. "The love of the marvellous," says Mercier, "conquers us always, because, feeling at sea, how little we know of the natural forces, everything that leads us to sane manifestation in that line is received with respect."

These reasons explain the success of Casanova as an adept at the Cabbala. To exploit in his contemporaries their mania for the supernatural was to show great cleverness as well as an extraordinary penetration in the inadequacy of his contemporaries.

In making the Unknowable his speciality, he arrived at a fixed position in a society admirably ready to hail his impostures with enthusiasm. To these half-sceptics, half-atheists, he offered the allurements of the marvellous. The man who calls himself a freethinker, while interpreting the world of spirits, becomes the most cynical and the most clever of impostors. He creates a following among those who, in spite of all, remain, at bottom, attached to some old superstition. He knows that by working tactfully he will not only be hailed by the enthusiasts, but be tolerated by the indifferent. Too clever not to discern the one class from the other, he will dupe by his fantasmagorie and his magic those who allow themselves to be duped. These thoughts put him at his ease and removed every scruple.

So now we find Casanova armed for Adventure. That which birth had not given him, he acquired

by ingenuity, intrigue, and by the invincible resolution to live at some one else's expense. However, he remembered the misfortunes which before his lucky meeting with M. de Bragadin, had so often thrown his life out of joint. He meant to avoid for the future such annoying changes, and to place himself under the shelter of the unforeseen and to take no chances. How? By Protection. He knew that the support of persons in high places gave consideration, favour, estimation, all made for success and sometimes might paralyse justice. For this reason he always would be in the train of some great man. And no one was better at the art of making his acquaintances. He collected letters of recommendation and showed a high talent in exploiting their advantages. It surprises us to see this intriguer shake great men by the hand, dally with greatly-born ladies, and sit down, by invitation, at dinners given by high personages. He put into profit all the complaisant indulgence of his century. The great thing was the Introduction. Then one was accepted through politeness or from friendship with the Introducer. His boldness did the rest. Moreover, all Society was mixed, one cheat the more mattered little so long as the appearance of Society was all right. That kind of person was moreover amusing. "Come to dine with me to-morrow," wrote an Amphytrion, "it is my rogues' day and they will amuse you." * Our hero was very entertaining. He paid his welcome in bon-mots, in *Vers de Société*, in compliments, in little services, and sometimes in kind and loyal

* V. du Bled, *Quelques grands élégants depuis trois siècles*, Le Correspondant, 1914, ii. 365.

deeds. His parasitism had in it elements of worthiness and praise.

With gambling as a means of existence, and his Cabbala as a means of influence, with some powerful protectors and far-reaching associations, Casanova could begin confidently to live the life for which he was born. Before 1746, he tried his luck with every chance against him; without health, poor, unknown, he was at the mercy of luck. He resembled, in his tumultuous beginnings, those embryos laid in the bosom of the ocean, which are so delicate and fragile that it seems they must needs perish in the eternal movements of the seas. But the Organism grows, develops itself, gets stronger and develops its tentacles, and eventually becomes lord of the tempest and ruler of the ocean. In the struggles of his life Casanova developed his personality. That personality, eager, avid, lively, would not submit to the trials of chance. On the other hand, he struggled with many formidable forces to predestine his own fate. It was an extravagant struggle, but does not lack interest. To get through in spite of difficulties, to be rich, powerful, to enjoy oneself, and in every way and always, with all one's strength and all one's mind, in spite of the obstacles, the prejudices, jealousies, hatreds, and even against the law. It seemed a far-reaching idea but a delightful one. One where his natural ability, his charm, his liveliness and gaiety, and his wit would not be lost. He could employ tricks, caution, intrigue, and if they were not enough, boldness and violence. And if he felt himself on the point of being vanquished he would flee before defeat, and find another more favourable point of vantage.

Life must be for him beautiful, happy, enchanting! Why should he not play his trump card? When the gold in his pocket ran low why not dazzle by his cabbalistic magic some poor idiots? They were destined to be the prey of some sharper. Why not love a hundred women? Was it not their destiny, and did he not do it well? Why should he not cynically despise the world when the world was made for him, Casanova, who was the centre of it? And of which all the gaieties, enjoyments, riches, and amusements would never be enough to exhaust his insatiable desires?

A low ideal! Assuredly. A Society buccaneer. True! But who had taught him honesty, continence, goodness, and that wonderful virtue about which the people of the eighteenth century were always talking, but which they never practised? Who had ever shown him the real prestige that honour gives, the greatness of a soul, the dignity of a conscience? Who? The old sceptics and rakes, who stuck at nothing vicious. Those Princes of the Church who thought of nothing but their amours and intrigues. The Pope who amused himself with Rabelaisian stories. Monks and Priests eaten up by vanity and besmeared with vulgarity. Those girl outcasts, *declassée* great ladies, or nuns lost to shame? Those Public men who used the resources of the State, Kingdom, or Empire to suit their personal ambition, and who spent the public treasure gaily to enrich themselves and their kin? In what way could he gain self-respect that one owes to others and to oneself in his circle? A society where actors, eunuchs, and dancers mingled, where impoverished Counts sold the favours of their



VENICE BY NIGHT

By Gaetano Zampini

Showing the Venetian masks

Reproduced by permission of "La Sirène," Paris

wives and daughters for a meal. In a world of cafés, casinos, theatres full of men, tainted, hungry, and eager.

Where, moreover, in that Venetian life of frivolity, nervousness, luxuriousness, and passion? Events, circumstances, society and the times he lived in all combined to make Casanova an incontestable charlatan. Certainly! But the eighteenth century was full of persons to whom history has given fame and honour, glory and probity, yet who, considered for their own intellects and in their own private lives, had nothing like the intelligence and energy of Giacomo Casanova, self-created Chevalier de Seingalt, and really *Chevalier d'Industrie*.*

* There were certainly in the eighteenth century, as in all the worst periods, many good and noble men and many virtuous women, but these were not a part of the shameless society, for, finding themselves lost or out of place there, they remained in their own homes. Casanova never met them.

IV

WILD LIFE—THE PIOMBI

"Youth is a continued intoxication. It is the delirium of reason."—
LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

LODGED, provided for, cherished and protected by the excellent Senator Bragadin, his purse well lined with sequins of which it is best not to enquire the origin, and with spirit ready for any adventure, Casanova was happy. He enjoyed at last what he had so long desired, independence. He was free to do what he liked in his pleasures or his whims. He arranged his idleness so as to transform his life into a continual programme of delight. He would lounge in the Piazzetta, well dressed, scanning who was there, saluting a lady gallantly, interesting himself ceaselessly in the going and coming of the crowd. There, lying at ease upon the cushions of his gondola, he was lost in the traffic of the Grand Canal, passing and repassing before the palaces redolent of fame and splendour, grazing the variegated pali * whose reflection shows zigzag in the wavelets of the water. Or, having stirred the mud of the little *rios* difficult and smelly, he suddenly goes into the full light and is carried off, across the extended brilliance of the lagoons towards Fusina or Murano. At another time, hat pulled

* Piles intended to keep the gondolas from the landing-place.

down, and covered with mask and domino, he went in private upon the less-known ground of a distant quarter. There, with windows from which washing hung, a humble dwelling, arches covered with moss, where a bending wall abutted on a curious garden, open spaces, half in shade or in sunlight, where played lots of half-naked brats, darkened by the sun or by dirt, steeples off the straight, which sloped with a curious ease, the blue of the sky beyond. To this quarter Casanova would haste, he climbed the steps of a bridge, bullied the loungers there, came to the opposite bank, hailed a gondolier, and then, having thrown off the scent, at last came prudently to some rendezvous with a loved one, unless it was where he was practising some great incantation. A lovely life! He trifled along the Merceria, amused to see the vegetables brought there and their market, watched the getting under way or the return of the fishing-boats. But if there passed a young girl with well-dressed hair, clever looking, with a neat ankle, he was off at once in pursuit. The days pass and he forgets their flight. A lovely life! He could sleep at dawn, take his siesta in the hot hours of the day, frequent the theatres, cafés, casinos, gambling hells, discourse well or evilly, have a good time with his friends in his own droll way, and then, having gone home, write some biting epigram or some sonnet boiling with superlatives; or a comedy abounding with allusions which were quite obvious, or simply to read an interesting book. Whenever he liked he left Venice to lead the same charming life at Padua, Milan, Parma, or elsewhere. Everything was to him a means of distraction and amusement.

But his most absorbing preoccupation was Woman. Elegant, of good figure, of a bad reputation and a successful one, he was naturally favoured at the start. He had already had much experience as a lover. With women he knew how to take a line at the same time respectful but dubious, that gentle and humorous attitude which allows the boldest deeds and the wildest attempts under cover of an irreproachable urbanity. His pursuit was so captivating, his assiduity so flattering, that all obstacles fell, and he triumphed over the greatest difficulties. And, having got all he wanted, when he felt tired of his prey or saw breakers ahead in a love affair that was lasting too long, he knew exactly how to free himself, returning the girl in a pleasant manner to her family or finding her a husband, or even transferring her to a friend.

As he went on, the more he recognized that life without care was the only life worth living, the only one he could endure. His successes as a gambler, as a cabbalist, as a man fortunate in love and as a wit increased his hopes. Venice and Italy were not large enough for him. He wished to appear on a grander scene and obtain an official recognition of his merit. "The French," he writes, "are certainly the most fascinating people in Europe and perhaps in the world, but that does not prevent Paris from being especially the city where imposture and the trade of charlatans are able to do their best" (ii. 266). It was there, therefore, that he decided to finish his education.

In Paris he says he is a traveller, rich enough, eager to learn *les manières*, passionately fond of the drama and of literature. M. Cazanaube is an Italian, son of an Italian comedian, who never

appeared on the boards in Paris. He has a competence which allows him to satisfy his love for literature and travel.* This admirable position allowed him to go everywhere in spite of his ignorance of the language and French ways. Thanks to his friendship with Mario Ballelli and his wife, Silvia, the celebrated actors of the *Comédie Italienne*, he frequented, very naturally, all the theatres where the renown of his mother as an actress gave him a good reception. In the *coulisses* he made friends with many men about town who, while seeming to cultivate the charms of the actresses and the dancers, yet were interested in this Italian who was a free lance and amused themselves with his wild language.

Silvia introduced him to Crébillon, the Tragic-writer, a colossus but young in his seventy-sixth year. He adopted Casanova, and three times a week, in the Marais quarter, he initiated him into the intricacies of the French language, in the presence of a collection of cats, while smoking endless pipes. He was also introduced to Fontenelle, the patriarch of literature, and to d'Alembert, who was already celebrated. He made friends with l'Abbé de Voisenon, knew some literary ladies like Madame de Graffigny, perhaps Madame de Boccage, and was much with Bohemians who had no social standing, such as Patu. In a very short time he became a Parisian, full of go and politeness. In time he took part in the life of letters, he composed poems, translations, and indeed a comedy in collaboration with the Prévôt d'Exmes.† "Literature

* Les Frères Parfaict, *Dictionnaire des Théâtres*, v. pp. 421, 432 (1756).

† *Les Thessaliennes, ou Arlequin au Sabbat*, comédie en trois actes en prose avec divertissements, représentée le 24 Juillet 1752, à la Comédie Italienne. This piece was played four times, but had no success.

gives no exact position," says Duclos,* "but it gives a position for all that to those who have none and gains for them a distinction which their superiors by birth do not always enjoy." Then there were the women, and to Casanova you must understand this side of life meant much. There were so many that the *Mémoires* do not mention all. There was Mimi Quinso, his landlady's daughter; Mlle. Vesian, a beautiful foreigner whom he launched into the world of the bad, gay rich; Louison Morphy, the humble scullion, who knew poverty and tatters before she was recruited for the harem of Louis XV.; Madame Pitrot, whom he consoled; Silvia herself, whose old age he would have been happy to delight; Mlle. Saint Hilaire, who lived in the house of "Madame Paris"; and, if he had wished, he insinuates, the Duchesse de Chartres herself. A very likely thing when one knows the shamelessness of that great lady to whom Casanova exhibited the secrets of his Cabbala.

His personality took its definite form during his long residence in France. He gained that ease in assimilation, and initiative, the aptitude of getting through difficulties and profiting by everything, and what would naturally follow, conceit, reliance, and great self-admiration.

Thus, when he re-entered his own country in 1753, what airs he put on among the excellent Venetians, gay, happy, but immersed always in their little pleasures and small ambitions! To him how narrow did the Grand Canal appear, how small the Piazzis, how barbarous the basilica of San Marco, and truly *Gothic* the Palace of the Doges compared

* *Considérations sur les Mœurs.*



"MISS O'MURPHY" (LOUISE MORPHY)
By F. Boucher
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with the vast harmony of the Palace of Versailles ! How dull the Venetian crowds were compared with the animation of the Palais Royal ! He brought back with him, as he thought, the manners of the great cities, their new ideas and the latest fashions, which the Venetians, provincials shut up within their lagoons, had not heard of yet. Full of swagger, he gave the *ton* to bloods, settled quarrels, thought everything allowable, criticized old customs, sneered at religion, and omitted no chance of showing off his sorcery, magic, or cabbala. He was much in the society of the foreign ministers—a thing always looked askance at in Venice—became intimate with M. l'Abbé de Bernis, the French Ambassador, in a strangely piquant way. Flattered the luxury, the gluttony and the atheism of Lord Murray, the English Ambassador. He was the fortunate, but perhaps imprudent lover of the beautiful M. M., whose name, it seems, was inscribed in the *Libro d'Oro*. All was known in Venice, where every one was occupied in trifles, where tittle-tattle and scandals were the daily food of the idle, and where spies, both official and officious, were in swarms. "Where the walls had ears and keyholes eyes." * He exceeded all limits, assumed impudence and cynicism. His affectation of swagger and perhaps his successes turned his compatriots against him in spite of their tolerance, and made them hostile. At last, he reached the limit. Attached to a literary group, he systematically hissed the plays of the Abbé Chiari—very poor, to be sure—and applauded to the echo those of the patrician Zorzi, which were not much better, because, for a man who had feelings

* Philippe Monnier, *Venise au XVIII^e Siècle*, p. 6.

as strong as Casanova, the enemies of his friend became his own worst enemies.

The exasperation against him rose to its heights. Certain of his antagonists were now in high places—the Senator Condulmer, for example, had been recently made Inquisitor of the State. Besides this, Condulmer owned a large interest in the theatre of Sant Angelo, where the plays of the Abbé Chiari were being produced. To belittle those was to diminish the income of the proprietor who himself, they said, loved money! He loved also, it was said, pretty girls with ardour, although he was past sixty. He was in love with Madame Zorzi, but found out one fatal day that she was in love with our handsome Giacomo. One can imagine the old man's rage! It is easy to see why he wished to catch the insolent, rebellious, handsome young scamp of low birth who whisked away from him both his income and mistress. Though one is State Inquisitor one is none the less a human being. One has no doubt that the Senator was not displeased when he heard complaints about Casanova, if he was not more. These complaints were numerous and serious. Here was one of the many reports of Manuzzi the spy, especially ordered to keep a watch on our imprudent hero:—

“What kind of a fellow is this son of *la Buranella* and how does he carry on his curious career? Unfrocked priest, violinist at the Theatre of the Noble Grimani, lawyer attached to the office of Marco Lezze, he has been through all these careers.

“Now no one knows that he has any means of subsistence, and yet he never wants money. One cannot deny that he has been well taught. Some,

indeed, believe that he has *una gran testa*. He has travelled as a man of letters in France and in England; he writes prose and poetry. One meets him at the Merceria in the *botteghe d'acque* (Water Sellers) in conversation with Marc-Antonio Zorzi, Bernard Memmo, Antonio Braidà, whose chief occupation is to hiss down the comedies of the Abbé Chiari. At the same time a play of his runs, though under the rose. He is a clever man; he introduces himself everywhere. Not a Noble, he is in Patrician sets and incites their young men to become libertines. A Venetian, he has dubious acquaintances with the Ministers of Foreign States. He abuses the credulity of simple folk by turning their heads with his stories of Cabbala and Rosicrucian mysteries. He persuades them that they will not die but that they will pass along the road of the Milky Way into the country of the Adepts. So he is able to live at other people's expense and especially on Zuan Bragadin at Santa-Marina. He is an Epicurean and a voluptuary who attracts indifferently married women or girls. Finally, he is an Atheist, who pierces the walls of Religion and mocks openly all those who practise it. He has about him many evil books, and at the bottom of a cupboard, strange objects, of which one is a kind of leather apron like what those men who call themselves Masons wear in what they style their Lodges."*

This was too much. It was necessary to make this intriguer disappear. The Tribunal of the State Inquisitors agreed to do this.

On July 26, 1755, at dawn, Matteo Varutti,

* G. Mola, *Revista Europea*, t. xxiii. pp. 856-859. Cf. Charles Samaran, *Jacques Casanova, Vénitien*, p. 104. Salv. Di Giacomo inserts into his Italian translation of the *Fuite des Plombs* eight reports of Manuzzi on the subject of Casanova (*Historia della mia fuga delle prigioni della Repubblica di Venezia detto "li Piombi,"* Milan, 1911).

Capitan Grande, accompanied by some police, presented himself at the house of the adventurer, arrested him and conducted him to the Palace of the Doges. They threw the accused into a cell overheated by the furnace, and almost deprived of air and light, too low for his high stature, and given up to incursions of unfearing rats and eager fleas.

The first days of his captivity he passed in a kind of stupefaction, alternating with wild rages. He knew that a prisoner in the Piombi was dealt with arbitrarily and put beyond all human law. But ignorant of the exact reason for his imprisonment and uncertain of its duration,* and also relying on the influence of his protectors, he hoped day by day for his release. His wait was long drawn out. Autumn succeeded summer. New State Inquisitors replaced those who had condemned him, yet no good fortune came to change his sad situation. Then his depression left him. His strong mind, his stubborn energy, again reappeared. He had but one thought, but one idea, to escape. All the wealth of his imagination, all the powers of his initiative, all the eagerness of his wishes, all the powers of his artifice and all the calculations of his intelligence were placed in movement to arrive at this end. Nothing discouraged him, neither real difficulties nor mishaps, deceptions, misfortunes, nor

* This is the act by which Casanova was condemned, "21 agosto 1755, Venute a cognizione del Tribunale le molte riflessibili colpe di Giacomo Casanova principalmente in disprezzo publico della Santa Religione, S.S. E.E. lo fecero arrestare e passar sotto li piombi."

L'oltrascritto Casanova condannato anni cinque sotto li piombi, Andrea Diedo, Inquisitor, Antonio Condulmer, Inquisitor, Antonio Da Mula, Inquisitor (Venice, *Archives d'Etat Inquisiteurs d'Etat*. Notes B. 534, p. 245), cf. Salvatore di Giacomo, *Op. cit.* Documente IX.

the continual watching to which he was subjected, nor the treason or the weakness of his accomplices.

During the night of October 31 to November 1, 1756, he escaped in the company of Father Balbi, who was prisoner in a neighbouring cell; the roof was pierced and the leaden covering disturbed. The two fugitives managed to scale the highest point of the roof and then wandered about it to try to find a part of the palace far from their prison. They went back at the peril of their lives and through a dormer-window which led to the garrets. Forcing open a door here and there they were able to descend to the Square and then escaping to the quay they were carried off by a gondola.* But they had to escape from Venetian territory. Casanova did not do this except with a thousand difficulties and horrible fatigues. He had no money, hardly any clothes. He risked his liberty every instant, but always escaped his recapture by his quick wit, his coolness, and his presence of mind; at last he arrived at the foreign territory of Borgo di Valsugano, and he was safe!

So his youth ended. He was now thirty-one. The fifteen months he had passed in prison had killed it. He now began to profit by his experience. Up to now his adventures had the appearance of gaiety and want of care, pleasure being his only end. Henceforth he turned to pleasure, ambition. He wished to become something more than simply a reveller. His vanity, his insatiable wish to hold the

* The gaoler of Casanova, Lorenzo Basadonna, was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in the "Pozzi" (*Archives des États de Venise*). Cf. Salv. di Giacomo. Dr. Guède, who has studied the escape of Casanova on the spot, is of opinion that his escape was assisted by the influence of the Senator Bragadin.

stage must push him to very widespread enterprises, The success of his escape exaggerated his importance. and his confidence in himself, as well as his contempt for other mortals. La Bruyère says, "The world gives but two ways of raising one's self, the one is by real industry, the other is through the stupidity of other folks." He assumed the firm position that, for the future, he would use both ways. Convinced in regard to his superiority, and unmistakably wishing to succeed without any hindrances, he was well equipped for the conquest of all that was agreeable—fortune, honours, and especially the thing most essential, the universal need, the indispensable stepping-stone, Money.

V

THE APOGEE

"We are in the century when extraordinary things happen."—LOUIS XV. TO THE MARÉCHAL DE NOAILLES.

HE arrived in Paris, January 5, 1757. People remembered him there, especially the Balletti family. He lodged near them in the Rue du Petit-Lion-Saint-Sauveur. But the locality, too much filled with actors, men of letters and noble *roués*, became insufficient as a jumping-off ground. He looked higher. The best way of exploiting fortune is to approach the great personages who command it.

It was best, therefore, to escape from doubtful companions, to give up habits that were thought scandalous, to look after his reputation, in short to take the position of a serious man, to inspire more confidence in himself. He must appear as such. A monthly payment of a hundred crowns settled upon him by the good M. de Bragadin allowed him to prepare himself for the first outlays.

Moreover, in coming to Paris the clever fugitive knew what he wanted. Far beyond the miserable recollections of his imprisonment he remembered the nights of refined licence passed at Murano in the Casino of the Abbé de Bernis. He had so charmed away, it seemed, the ennui of that great personage

during the last period of his Venetian Embassy and had been associated with his private life, that the difference between their rank had almost been abolished. This had caused in the Ambassador an amused sympathy for the adventurer, and in the latter a sort of respectful hail-fellow-well-met feeling for the Ambassador. Well, at the beginning of the year 1757, Joachim de Pierre de Bernis, Minister of the Council of State, directed at Paris the Department of Foreign Affairs.* His policy of an alliance with Austria against Prussia and England had triumphed. He was the man of the hour, very much in evidence, very active, ready to get the utmost of his position and of his grandeur. What an enormous advantage this was for Casanova ! What a splendid string to his bow, to have exchanged a mistress with a very great man, was an exceptional piece of good luck !

“To halve with Jupiter can dishonour nobody.” †

This alliance (a little antedated perhaps) constitutes, when one means to get on, a good reason for advancement, a link with greatness, a link in any case, and perhaps a claim to a certain consideration. Our hero therefore presented himself to the Abbé de Bernis.

We shall probably never know what the feelings of this very powerful minister were at the sight of the Venetian. We can almost wager he would have preferred to know that his former companion in vice was safely immured for ever in the Prison of Piombi. But a courtier can, as a principle, dissemble. M. de Bernis had an ambition for a Cardinal's hat.

* He received official rank as secretary to the Ministry in June, 1757.

† Molière, *Amphitryon*, Act III. Scene XI.

Therefore he thought he would throw no stones. It were better at once to close an opportunity for blackmail and gain good behaviour by kind actions. So he received Casanova with smiles, and after an exchange of stories of former times and news, promised him protection, and quietly slipped into his hand a *rouleau* of *louis d'or*. Then he was quick to recommend him to some persons in high places. M. de Boulogne, Paris-Duvernay, Choiseul,* and so launched his *protégé* into the maze of finance.

To find money for the State was the eternal problem. After the highest economies of the first part of the century, the incessant pilfering, and by want of order, France was almost ruined. The money question appeared more terrible yet, as a new war had just begun † when it was necessary to build up, equip and furnish the army to combat Prussia and England, the latter having a fleet and the former abounding with soldiers.

Experts, however well qualified, refused the superhuman task of filling the gaps in the Treasury, which was in complete confusion. This was an opportunity for a sharper to slip into this Bedlam unloosed. No one was ignorant at this time, that to have a place in public finance, especially when they were very much at sea, was to have a means of being kind to his own interests in any way he would. It was only necessary to have audacity, and to finger the money. Casanova had both.

* Choiseul arrived from Rome, where he had been Ambassador, February 12 1757. He was appointed Ambassador in Vienna in March, but did not go there until August 20. It was thus possible for him to have protected Casanova in his first few months in Paris. It was not, however, until the end of next year, when he succeeded to M. de Bernis in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that he could be useful to the adventurer.

† The Seven Years' War.

It is extraordinary to see how our hero believed in his destiny. He had just escaped from the prison of the Piombi, and might well have dreaded that of the Bastille. For finance he had no particular aptitude; he knew nothing of the foundations of political economy and the mystery of the administrative machinery. He himself was no more than a wheedler of women, a maker of epigrams, a card-sharper; and he knew this. He foresaw all the difficulties, the snares, the oppositions, the enormous hostile force of those opposed to him, as well as that caused by idleness or routine. He knew that in these thorny paths there were a hundred chances to one that he should fall, and that if he fell he would be made the scapegoat for those in power. No matter, there was no more to be said about it! A Casanova would show more cleverness, malice, intelligence, and genius, than all the rest of the officials, and, moreover, if a failure should occur, know well how to get out of the mess.

He made a beginning in the Lottery of the Military School. This school was intended for the instruction of officers of the French army. The five hundred pupils were drawn from the young nobles whose fathers had been killed in battle, had good service records, or else had not sufficient fortune to give their sons an education suitable to their rank.

A monument of gratitude erected in honour of old supporters of their country, and an evidence of thanksgiving to the nobles, the school was erected to the greater glory of the King. But the King, in his usual apathy of indifference, treated it with complete indifference. The idea of the foundation

occurred to Mme. de Pompadour, Paris-Duvernay assured its realization.

In 1752 the buildings commenced to decorate the fields of Grenelle, according to the plans by Gabriel. In 1756 they were almost ready and the pupils, hitherto relegated to Vincennes, took possession of the school. That was very well. Only in January, 1757, the debt of the school already exceeded two million livres, and the annual expenses were more than 78,000 livres in excess of the sums appropriated to the establishment. This sum was the glory which gave lustre to the bankruptcy.

It was necessary to find much money. The Council of the school, after some hesitancy, had faced the possibility of instituting a State Lottery to supply the necessary sum.* If one trusted wholly to the *Mémoires*, one might believe that Casanova would have put an end to the delays and brought all minds to one accord in favour of the lottery. But do not believe it—or, at least, only a little.

The persons who were Directors of the Military School were not men to let themselves be talked over by the gabble of a Casanova. When he was taken into the matter at all, the lottery had, on principle, been settled. Two Italians, brothers named Calsabigi, had already regulated its details and reckoned up the chances. They were excessively clever, too clever, especially the elder, and people had real reason to fear that they would not fail to profit by their position, to make their fortune without minding too much about that of the school.

* Lotteries, frequent in Italy, were not a new move in France. Louis XIV., not to go further back, had recourse to them. Paris came to know a lottery for the Hôtel de Ville in 1741, and one for *Les Enfants trouvés* in 1754.

Was Casanova more to be recommended? Assuredly not. But anyway he was recommended, and strongly, and he was the equal of the Calsabigi brothers in artifices and ingenuity. To introduce himself into the control of the lottery would be to dull the partnership of the two brothers, to limit their speculations, and to impose on them an element of perpetual surveillance. The super-thief against the thief. In these conditions, if the enterprise was to succeed, it would be more for the profit of the school and for that of the King; but if it should fail, the fault would be brought home to the three Italians and their collaborators—people of very small importance.

So, whatever the future might bring forth, the circumstances favoured the Adventurer. He arrived at the time to find everything almost ready, and to use for his own advantage the works of the brothers Calsabigi.

The lottery was authorized by a "*décret arrêté*" of the Council of State, August 15, and of October 15, 1757.

The elder Calsabigi became Administrator-General of it. He settled in the Rue Montmartre in a fine house opposite the Rue Croissant. Numerous business offices were established in Paris, in the Provinces, and also abroad. For his part, Casanova had the control of six agencies in Paris, and was to gain six per cent. on the turnover, besides a fixed salary of four thousand livres a year.

Director of the Lottery! The title flattered him, and would he not make it hum at every turn!

But he did not intend to fritter away his efforts between too many agencies. He preferred to

exploit one only, and pretend to make it bring in as much as the six together.

He installed himself luxuriously in the Rue Saint Denis.* The public would naturally go where one is known and shines, towards one who shows signs of comfort and wealth, it would bring its money more willingly to the comfortable office of a financier than to the stall of a miser. The five other little agencies were sold at once for the sum of two thousand livres each.

They fixed the date for the first drawing on April 18, 1758, and advertised to the public that the settlement of the outgoing numbers would be in operation eight days later at the office in the Rue Montmartre. But Casanova, counting on the zeal of gamblers to get their winnings as soon as possible, told the Parisians on his side that the winning numbers signed with his name would be paid twenty-four hours after the drawing at his Agency in the Rue Saint Denis. The gamblers rushed there. Besides the able Director had re-entered the world as a man-about-town, and was a constant frequenter of the theatres and public places. He carried always in his pocket a book of tickets. They begged him to sell them these, and so gold flowed into his cash-box.

The first drawing gave the utmost satisfaction. Fifteen times it re-occurred during the next two years, 1758 and 1759. The Military School got its due. As for Casanova, it was said that he got

* Or Rue Saint Martin. M. G. Capon tells us that in the list of the Parisian receivers, the name of Casanova does not appear, and that the Agency of the Rue Saint Denis was kept by one named Herbeau. Is he the confidential man mentioned in the *Mémoires*, Casanova keeping to himself the general direction? (G. Capon, *Casanova à Paris*.)

a profit of 100,000 francs a year. This was, doubtless, an exaggeration, but it is certain that the lottery brought him much success, and advertised him very favourably.

Between operations (August, 1757) he was entrusted with a private mission from the Government, to verify, but entirely in secret, the state of the fleet at Dunkerque. He did it very cleverly, and gained, on his return, very considerable remuneration.

We now see him with his foot in the stirrup. So much ingenuity and address, such calculated boldness and prudent adroitness, such aptitude in profiting by circumstances, had made of Casanova one of these quasi-official people who surround great men, and who, without any recognized position, or definite employment, become very useful helpers in very different ways. The war was going badly, the situation got worse every day. The Military Chiefs executed weakly the orders they received, harming each other by mean and petty jealousy, being slow in retreat, temporizing when they ought to have acted. At home, a powerful opposition noted with joy the coming wreck of their political opponents, and worked at their definite checkmate. M. de Bernis, driven wild, and overworked, saw his fall approaching. The state of the finances became more and more precarious. France had plenty of paper money, but little gold. Many debts, but small credit. The royal funds were worth very little, and were only accepted with no little difficulty. Yet money had to be procured and re-procured. Why not negotiate these funds with some wealthy foreign company,

who, having a solid foundation and certain victory, would side in the end with France, would accept the notes issued in the lowest terms in the hope of realizing them some day later, which might be made, thanks to them, a money-making proposition ?

Yet to carry this through successfully, it was necessary to make people believe that the end of the war was near. But also it was necessary to do this quietly, lest one should meet with a famous defeat—a second Resbach—which would ruin irremediably the French credit, which was already much damaged.

We cannot but admire the graceful ease with which Casanova, in his dealings in the lottery, had known how to put his best cards forward, and the public money in his own purse. Without doubt, that was not a sufficient reason for entrusting this Italian, tarnished, and so rightly suspected, with an important financial mission. We do not know in full what kind of commerce or what merchandise he was given to go to Holland and negotiate there the goods that seemed of such dubious value,* whatever it might be. M. d’Affry, Ambassador at The Hague, received in exchange equivalents for twenty millions of paper money. On his side, Casanova had to seek on the spot for the Speculators, and put them in touch with the French plenipotentiary. The Adventurer left for Holland at the end of the year 1758.†

* Casanova asserts that the germ of these financial negotiations was suggested to him by Kornemann, the banker, at the marriage of his brother Francis. He was wrong. The painter married only on June 26, 1762, at the Church of St. Laurent, Marie Jeanne Jolivet, a figurante in the ballet of the *Comédie Italienne*.

† And not in December, 1757, as the *Mémoires* assert.

He lost no time. According to his usual method he began by securing for himself excellent recommendations. Moreover, there was that of M. d'Affry, who, wishing to please his Minister, showed him the utmost favours. There were also the shipowners, the great men of commerce, and the rich Burgesses, who were the aristocracy in that country of merchandise. He succeeded at once, and was able to penetrate without difficulty through the worlds of finance and of commerce. Thanks to his good friends and himself, and to his untiring activity and his affectation of wealth, he dazzled the good and simple Dutch, and carried his transaction, concerning twenty millions, through with advantage. The Treasury gained to the extent of 18,200,000 livres, in net money, or in unliquidated shares. This was a success.

But while allowing himself to be employed in the affairs of the King, the fortunate go-between had not forgotten to make his own fortune prosper. They say that money draws money. By cleverness, chance, charlatan-like jugglery, cabbalistic cheatery, and doubtless by levies more or less legitimate on the public funds, Casanova had acquired for himself very considerable sums of money. When he returned to Paris, he himself owned a large fortune.

For the first time in his life, the true wealth smiled on him. Money opened delightful vistas in the world of pleasure, and it also flattered his real vanity. This grew greater in its strength and its boldness. He, grandson of a cordwainer, son of the dancer and the actress, the poor devil not so long ago the victim of Fra Stephano, the failure of both

priesthood and the army, the violinist of Saint Samuel, the humiliated prisoner of the *Serenissimi Signori*, the vagabond with the quick footfall and the hungry tooth, the thief of yesterday, the cheat of to-day, filled his lungs and commanded respect on account of his wealth, which gleamed in a way that was as striking as it was new. What an unmeasurable joy ! To drive about, to be surrounded with luxurious state, to have an important air, to be able to say to some one recommended to him, " My friendship and protection you already have, and my purse is at your service " ; to pass as a man of fashion, to parade with the ladies before the eyes of a wondering public, to see himself received by the Ministry, and to show himself gallantly dressed in the *foyer* of the theatres, squandering, while laughing, gold so long coveted. This was the realization of dreams which had seemed too good ; the journey's end which his eager youth had so wildly desired. We see him now in the highest period of his fortune. The *apogee* of his career.

Let us look at it well. He is now as he ought to be, and what he has wished to be. The upward bent of his personal development has attained its highest point. He has accomplished his destiny.

To cut a figure, to shine. That had become for him not only a desire, a work, but also a kind of duty. What does it matter where the money comes from ? He is rich—" *riche d'un million.*" * He throws about that gold which gives all the influence, all the power, but ranks it among the causes of the world's happiness. He does not behave in an easy way, like a true *nouveau riche*. He squanders uselessly

* *Précis de ma vie.*

idiotic amounts to show off for his own satisfaction, and for the curious admiration of others. This was according to the interchangeable laws which direct the ideas of the parvenu. However, thanks to his good opinion of his own deserts, he adapted himself easily to his new conditions, and behaved as if it was very natural that he was covered by favours and fortunes.

Stately, lavish, glittering, he covers himself in his own opulence. The furnished suites in hotels, sometimes doubtful, but which he had used up to this time, are now unworthy of such a brilliant gentleman. "I took a splendid lodging near the Rue Montorgueil." He needed, moreover, a country house as a pastime. The one he found was situated in Petite-Pologne, outside the Barrière de la Madeleine, on the Chemin de Mousseaux (now the Rue du Rocher), situated between a court and a garden, provided with the owner's fine suite of rooms, stables, coach-houses, it was a good place to be surrounded with pleasure, far from the crowded neighbourhoods of the town. Our Adventurer rented it for a few hundred livres a year from the Sieur le Roy, a bourgeois, enriched by trafficking in food-stuffs. The servants included an excellent woman cook, a coachman who governed with a high hand, two footmen, and a groom. The stables contained five horses, the coach-house two carriages, and the cellar excellent wine. It was full of comfort.*

* At Petite-Pologne, every one lived well. Before Casanova the Count de Clément had a grand time there with two Opera girls, the sisters Le Duc. The Marquis de Saint Chamans, with the demoiselle Duvat, or M. de la Vierville, with a great number of young persons, whose chief duty was to look charming. When he left, the Venetian had "illustrious successors." "The Marquis de Duras is buried at Petite-Pologne in a little house, which he rented from one Le Roy, a butter merchant, with the

With his excellent house in town, his little house in the suburbs, his carriages, his domesticity, his set and his money, Casanova led a very fast life. Since Fortune smiled upon him, he seemed to count upon her smiling. Moreover, since he had created a speciality in financial speculations, he ripened a fiscal project on successions. He thought also of returning soon to Holland, that fortunate country so happy in these things, to negotiate there a loan at five per cent. He dreamed of many other things yet, and all of those without doubt would bring something big to the State as well as to himself.

But the activity of a man who thinks himself so brilliant and so clever, can surely hardly be constrained into one kind of business affair. Industrial enterprises, when they are governed by wide views and a sufficient foundation of capital, might give wonderful results.

Thanks to his knowledge of chemistry, he knew all about dyes. Why should he not rival on silk goods the woven pattern by a coloured stamped one? Weaving was long, costly, and complicated, whereas stamping in colours would be rapid and easy, and once the machinery to do it with was installed and paid for, there would be few expenses. Doubtless the woven patterned stuffs which made the fortune of Lyons, would remain always the best goods, but the others at a cheaper price would sell easily and be certain of large profits. This original idea Casanova asserts to have realized, and started both

Demoiselle Montansier. The Sieur Du Barry took care to find it out with Mlle. Beauvoisin, his mistress. They assure me that he gambles there often" (*Journal of the Inspectors of M. de Sartines*, January 1, 1762; all the statements preceding this are from Capon, *op. cit.* pp. 309, 310, 432, and from Charles Samarin, *op. cit.* pp. 202 et 59).

workshop and saleroom in l'Enclos du Temple. The defalcation of a partner was the only hindrance. It remains to be seen whether the new discovery was not a pretext to seek for more and more money, and to serve as a blind for a gigantic swindle, for in spite of his wealth and the activity of his projects, he was urged on by a perpetual need of money. To get it, he had not been slow to fall back on his customary means, those of practising cabbala and handling the cards with dexterity. But he did these things with a grand air. He robbed the Marquise d'Urfé with his stories of the world beyond, always best received, and the more lucrative, the wilder they might be. He associated himself also with a gang of super-sharpers, famous robbers and rapacious in false play. What had become of his good resolves of 1757 ? There had been, there was now more than ever, and there would be always in Casanova, falsified appearances which more or less obscured the truth. His conduct changes ceaselessly, according to the concessions that he made to his vanity or his temperament. On the one side, the wish to shine and to seem to be a great man ; to wait on and even be the friend of bigwigs ; to exhibit himself as a brilliant talker, a man of wit and a perfect gentleman. On the other hand, there was in him an overflow of low instincts, vulgar, coarse, dirty, the need of immediate satisfaction of low pleasure ; revolting cynicism of thought and action which was at the bottom of his nature and which always ended by winning.

This is why the rich Casanova of 1759, so brilliant and so well assured, did not hesitate long before one finds him mixed up in one of these very complicated stories of false letters of credit, with jobbery, with

compromises and altercations with deceived and saddened husbands, with seductions, with abductions, with a dubious meeting in the house of an abortionist, and with a thousand other strange pranks too open not to invite the intervention of the police. It was necessary for him to leave Paris rather quickly for so remarkable a man, leaving at once Petite-Pologne, his friends and mistresses, and leaving his dupes and his creditors to fight it out between them. But he preserved at the same time efficacious and powerful protectors there—and he carried with him—a wise thing—this letter of recommendation to M. d’Affry * :—

“AMBASSADOR AT THE HAGUE.

“Versailles, September 29, 1759.

“The Sieur de Casanova, Venetian, who is already known to you, Monsieur, intends to return to Holland, where he has already rejoiced in your kindness in the first journey that he made there. You know that he is a man of letters, who has the desire to improve his acquaintance, especially in the line of commerce. I am persuaded, therefore, that you will accord to him your kind offices on these occasions, which may put him in the position of having recourse to them. I shall be very obliged if you will be good enough to give him a good reception. . . .

“LE DUC DE CHOISEUL.”

It is useless to follow Casanova to Holland and to other places. That which he did in Paris, he did in a measure everywhere. He invented nothing better in self-advancement and bluff. To follow

* M. d’Affry replied that the traveller was a rascal. Choiseul disavowed Casanova (see Capon, *op. cit.* p. 430).

out his adventures and his wanderings would be to assist, in different forms, in the same enterprises, the same deceits, and similar love affairs.

During the few years when it was given to him to exploit his most unexpected good fortune, we shall see him always to advantage, loquacious and wily, to shine, to play, and to deceive; always singing his own praise and exalting his repute, but yet ceaselessly mixed up in shady affairs, always creeping into the world of those in power but without ceasing to know the dregs of society. Conquering all hearts, winding thread at the feet of the greatest of ladies, or mats of straw with beggar women, always drawing horoscopes or practising cabbala, amusing some, interesting others, and deceiving everybody. He wasted without a thought the gold that he had got together by the strangest means, and screamed like a sea-eagle if, by chance, some one ventured to suspect him, or attack him, making a song about his honesty, protesting his good faith, exclaiming about his honour that was being injured, and, at last, decamping with or without a pretext to begin again just the same.

No one was his equal for throwing dust in people's eyes. He created himself Chevalier de Seingalt or, even better, Chevalier Seingalt de Farusi; he wore as a decoration the bejewelled cross of an Order of little value. He finished by forgetting that he himself was Casanova. He was the epoch of great travels and wondrous successes. These lasted as long as he knew how to manœuvre in such a way as to mislead public opinion, to keep up his prestige, to dazzle with his luxury, to astonish by his cleverness, so long as he could manage to hold the right

balance between his desire to cut a figure and his madness for play. In fact, as long as he, in arriving in a new place, had not been preceded by the fame, always growing, the impositions, scandals and unfortunate stories which surrounded him wherever he had been.

VI

THE DECLINE

“Old fools are more foolish than the young.”—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

IT was in London that he first failed to direct fortune. “I have made a note of that time, September, 1763, as one of the curses of my life. Truly it was after that that I felt myself growing old, though I was only thirty-eight” (vi. 6). He had, all the same, overtired himself by the eight years of debauchery, of wild deeds, and of long rounds of misdeeds accomplished since his forced tranquillity under the roof of the Piombi. It was necessary to have a mental and physical organization as good as the one he had to have been able to hold out so long.

Yes, he weakened. London was fatal for him. He lodged in a house where also stayed a brilliant young woman, clever, affectionate, pretty, and he respected her! He pursued, on the other hand, another beauty whose charms had made him wild, and she made him respect her too by making him ridiculous by her aggravation. These were unlucky symptoms. After some months of a life, unpleasant and difficult, he fled precipitately from England, cheating as usual on the value of a forged letter of credit and carrying away the savings of his servant.

For the first time his confidence in himself was dulled. He has offended these gentlemen who have

been of his company and in the operations which he has not been able to master. However, he roused himself and put things to rights. At Berlin, when there he met the younger Calsabigi, who continued to traffic in lotteries, but experienced some difficulties with Frederick II. For one instant Casanova hoped to recommence the exploits of his Parisian lottery. Recommended by Lord Keith, better known under the name of Milord Maréchal, he was able to present himself before the King of Prussia. But before the fixed and currish look, the brusque speech of that man without decorations, in undress uniform and heavy boots, and who was Frederick the Great, Casanova was disgruntled and remained open-mouthed, then stammered an answer, and was snubbed by the King. Decidedly there was nothing doing at Berlin.

It was better to leave for Russia. It was the meeting-place of adventurers. Our one met a large army of them. He made especial friends with Prince Charles of Courland, a great Russian Prince, who by his excessive love of debauch, his unrestrained temperament, his mad pleasures, his absolute want of scruple and his eternal need to find money, even by alchemy, appeared predestined to find out Casanova. Casanova himself, disconcerted by his want of success in London and Berlin, remounted his high horse for a moment. His intercourse with the Prince allowed him to lead at Saint Petersburg, at Riga and at Moscow the gay life of Paris. But, nearing forty, amusement was not his only desire. He wished a settled position, a rich sinecure, it did not matter what as long as it had a salary attached to it. Not finding this in Russia, he went to Poland

in search of it. At Warsaw, there was the same life of gaiety and gambling, similar meetings with great lords and cheats, none of whom were much better than the other. Unfortunately, at the Court of King Stanislas they did not appear to wish to utilize his many capabilities, nor did they even consult him on literary subjects, which, unremunerative though it was, was extremely flattering. For a moment he became conspicuous by a romantic duel with Branicki. To have an affair of honour with a grandee makes one his equal! He wounded his adversary badly and was himself wounded in the left arm. This incident gave him a certain pleasure. However, odd rumours began to circulate in Warsaw. Casanova, the victor over the Colonel Count Branicki, was, it seemed, a sharper who had already plied his trade in England and Italy. They said also that he had been hung in effigy in Paris for having filched large sums from the till of his lottery. Every one turned their backs on him now, and an order of the King's enjoined him to leave the city. He left, leaving behind him nothing but sneers and sarcasms, as this letter of the Abbé Taruffi shows:—

“ . . . It is a pity that the famous Casanova, late hero and sham noble and a self-styled wit into the bargain, had not the cleverness to sustain his great character. One is sorry that he (Branicki) has crippled so nobly a simple adventurer. A short time after his brilliant exploit some unfortunate anecdotes, well vouched for, fluttered all the doves. Astonishment gave place to mistrust, and a caning was talked of. At last, however, they were content to address the good ‘Chevalier sans reproche’ and beg him eloquently to continue his journey.

This shows how our wonderful butterfly returns suddenly to his state of caterpillar again." *

The wandering life began anew. At Vienna he was expelled by the police. At Paris he had to flee in the name of the King. Europe, where lately he traversed as top-dog, became strangely narrow. There remained, however, Spain. Alas! his reputation at Madrid was already well known. Coldly received by the authorities, it wasn't long before he passed some days in prison. He felt more and more isolated in the midst of the general mistrust, heard himself described as "an oddity," and took flight. At Barcelona there was the same failure. He was put in a cell for forty-eight hours and told to decamp as quickly as he could. He went quickly enough to the South of France, stopping some time at Aix, where he fell ill, and then got to Italy. He went from town to town, accompanied by different kinds of luck, generally bad rather than good. Reduced to different expedients, one day well received, to be insulted the next, with empty purse and rage in his soul, but keeping his end up according to his old manner.

One great weight discouraged him. Of all his past history nothing remained but some ruins. He saw this from day to day as his existence grew more and more poverty-stricken and difficult. The calamity feared above all others became nearer. Old Age knocked at the door. He fell into bitter thoughts. "It was at this time, perhaps for the first time in my life, that I thought about my past,

* Letter of the Abbé Taruffi to Melchior Cesarotti (Warsaw, June 25, 1766. Cf. Salv. Di Giacomo, *op. cit.* p. 199).

deploring my conduct, cursing the fifty years which I would soon attain, leaving no room for any illusion, and hating to have no outlook but the miseries of old age, with no employment, no money, with only a doubtful reputation and vain regrets to feed myself on" (vi. 399).

He was done. Little by little all doors were shut to him. Even his successes with women became rare. The ladies regarded him as an old man whose place a young spark would fill better. "O Horror!" he cried one day, "forty-seven years over my head!"

For some time back an idea had haunted him. He would obtain a pardon and go to Venice. It was the only place where he might find a haven of rest and perhaps a few friends. With this hope he had written during his imprisonment at Barcelona the refutation of a work very malevolent towards his compatriots.* He relied much upon this book, had it printed at Lugano and as if it was indirectly from the State Inquisitors. He intrigued, he bestirred himself, he seized every occasion to show his zeal and his good intentions.† The Inquisitors for long turned a deaf ear, but at last a safe-conduct dated September 3, 1774, allowed him to return to Venice, and he landed there on the 14th.

His pleasure was great, but rapidly diminished by the knowledge of his own downfall. What was

* *Histoire du Gouvernement de Venise*, Amelot de la Houssaye. This book when it came out, in the first years of the eighteenth century, raised the wrath of the Senate and provoked an official protest to the Court of France. Amelot de la Houssaye remained the *bête noire* of the Venetians.

† For the part of his life not touched on in the *Mémoires* one can consult with great results and much documentary evidence M. Charles Samaran and the work of J. F. H. Adnesse: *Casanova après ses Mémoires* (Bordeaux, Mounastre-Picamilh, 1919).

he but a poor devil who could scarcely make both ends meet? His past with all its boastings, insolences, and follies caused distrust and hostility. To remain he would need to hold himself with ceaseless prudence. For he had to earn his daily bread. Zuan Bragadin had died in debt, in 1767. He received a life interest of six sequins a month from the Senator Barbaro, dead in 1771. Another monthly payment of six sequins was assured him by the Senator Dandolo, who vegetated in a needy old age. It was poverty. "All the world waited to see me provided with position suitable to my capacity and necessary for my livelihood, but everybody deceived themselves though I did not." * In 1776 only, did the Tribunal of the Inquisitors consent to employ him as a secret agent, paying him according to the importance of the news he brought them, and in 1780 the Tribunal ended by giving him a fixed allowance of fifteen ducats *per mensem*.

A sad life! But doubtless it had its compensations. Old friends fêted him, he had a place at dinner in certain houses where he was admired, as in happier days, on account of his learning and his wit. Owing to his orders to theatres, he had his *entrée* to the many playhouses in Venice, from which he drew up in a little while the gazette with his "Messager de Thalie." At last he consoled himself with the affection of Francesca Buschini, doubtless a humble dressmaker, but who passionately worshipped her Giacomo. "A splendid man, full of heart, wit, and courage." † Their lives were sheltered in a small house of *Barberia delle tole*, near Sta. Giustina.

* *Histoire de ma fuite* . . . p. 269.

† Letter of Francesca Buschini, December 31, 1783.

This was but a poor compensation for the man who had gone about so far and lived in such unusual luxury, who had waited on the powers in the land, who had basked in the smiles of fortune and in the favour of pretty ladies! His disillusion remained bitter and his proper pride was wounded, for he had now become the paid spy to that Tribunal which he loathed, and the servant of that Administration which excited the sarcasms of his youth and the rages of his riper age. Many of his Reports have come down to us. They deal with commercial affairs, the uncertain details of foreign politics, and especially the injuries which religion and morality suffered at Venice. One cannot refrain from laughing when one sees Casanova disguised as a censor of public morals, concocting a diatribe upon "the excessive ease of Ecclesiastical Tribunals in pronouncing annulments of marriages" or "on the scandalous freedom that takes place in theatres when the lights go out," or on the fact that in some school of painting, scholars of twelve or thirteen years of age to paint naked models, as well those who are not there for art's sake. Nay, more, that one can find in Venice in bookshops or in private hands *Le Dictionnaire philosophique*, *La Pucelle*, *L'Emilie*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *l'Esprit*, by Helvetius; *Le Bélisaire*, by Maumontel; *l'Ode à Priape*, by Piron; *Les Poésies*, by Baffo; *Les Œuvres*, by La Mettrie; *La Sagesse*, by Charron; *Le Portier des Chartreux*, *La Religieuse en Chemise*, *Marguerite la Ravaudeuse*! A pleasant mixture!* One may

* These reports are given at length in the Italian translation of *L'Histoire de ma fuite*, by Salv. di Giacomo. They are described in the work of M. Adnesse. They were found by M. Bazzoni in the Venetian archives.

laugh, but what a pitiful thing it was ! He was so unhappy, and so ashamed that he dared not sign these reports under his own name, but borrowed for that service the pseudonym of Antonio Pratolini. At the end of the year 1781, the Inquisitors, finding doubtless his services not sufficient, withdrew his monthly pay of fifteen ducats, and he, maddened, pressed by need, and fallen into poverty, addressed this cringing and harrowing letter to them.*

“ MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND MOST EXCELLENT SIGNORI.

“ MONSIGNORI INQUISITORI OF THE STATE.

“ Covered with confusion, overwhelmed by misfortune and repentance, owning myself absolutely unworthy to address my humble writing to your Excellencies, confessing myself to have failed in my duty in the circumstances which have presented themselves, I, Giacomo Casanova, on my knees beg for the clemency of the State. I ask it to grant me by compassion and grace that which, in real justice, after reflection, it could not refuse me.

“ I beg that the Sovereign munificence may come to my aid, to the end that, being able to live, I may employ myself actively for the future in the service into which I have been initiated.

“ After this respectful prayer, the wisdom of your Excellencies will judge the willingness of my spirit and of my intentions.”

And it was Casanova who wrote thus ! Casanova, who was formerly full of hatred to all established government ! What secret rage must have burned in him when he found himself reduced to such servile tricks, and to have no other means of living but in that hated slavery !

* A. Baschet, *Archives de Venise*, p. 643.

His rage suddenly showed itself in a little book called "*Nè amori, nè donne, ovvero la Stalla d'Augia ripulita*," which appeared in August, 1782. In it he attacked the Abbé Carlo Grimani, and some other patricians. For long he had desired to attack this Grimani. One day, during a dispute, rather too violent, between one Carletti and Casanova, the Abbé told the latter he was wrong, and to be silent. This was the original cause of the attack. The libel was of the most venomous kind and excited general indignation. The world sided with Grimani and against Casanova. Casanova could, therefore, dream no more of remaining in Venice. "I am fifty-eight, I cannot travel on foot, and you see winter comes on apace, yet if I think of taking the road again as an Adventurer, I laugh when I see myself in the looking-glass." But *bon gré, mal gré*, he left for Vienna in January, 1783.

His distress was very great. This period of his life seemed harder still than the worst epochs of his youth, for it was youth that had now gone from him. Needy, pitiable, and dogged by suspicion, he led a wandering life in Austria and Holland; he was stranded in Paris in September, 1783. He attempted to re-create his fortune. In his old way, he essayed huge enterprises, the foundation of a newspaper, the creation of a canal from Narbonne to Bayonne. He dreamed for a moment of sailing to Madagascar, and was passionately interested in the flying attempts of the Brothers Montgolfier and Pilâtre du Rozier. But he had to give up everything, for a man of worn look, haggard expression, and eager speech was interesting to nobody. After a residence of two months at Paris, he had to go on

again, always moving on, in spite of the terrible cold, finding it difficult to live, and living day to day by solicitations which bordered on begging. At last he found a post at Vienna as Secretary to Signor Foscari, the Venetian Ambassador. His duties, though very humble, gave him a little assurance. One does not doubt that because he hurried the courier of the Ambassador he imagined that he controlled the Ambassador. He took up again contact with public life and its ceremonies, which had for so long been debarred to him. He was at the dinners, balls, and met the men of the day, and, as in former times, knew how to get round them by his originality, the number of his acquaintances and his untiring animation. He was approaching sixty, but he danced like a young man, ate like a wolf, and was smitten by a "giddy young thing" whom he thought of marrying. Unhappily, the Ambassador Foscari died, and we find Casanova once more without an occupation.

He vegetated for some months afterwards, in poor circumstances, at Teplitz, when a lucky chance allowed him to meet the Count de Waldstein. He, moved by his poverty, offered him the position of Librarian, with a pension of one thousand florins a year at his Castle of Dux in Bohemia. It was a piece of providential luck.

We can see at Dux the portrait of Waldstein, painted about his twentieth year. A fine face, regular features, coaxing expression, great natural distinction, expressed in kindness and simplicity. The young man, sprung from a proud family, pleased at first view by his rather careless air. His friends were agreed in praising his intelligence and his heart. In March, 1784, Count Lamberg

wrote to Casanova in a bizarre manner: "I know M. the Count de Waldstein, by having heard him praised by the connoisseurs worthy to be delighted by the transcendant qualities in more than one line peculiar to the Count. I congratulate you to have a Mæcenas like him, and I congratulate him, on the other hand, on having chosen a man like you." But notwithstanding his captivating looks, in him burned the turbulent Waldstein blood. Born in a frivolous age, and chief, from his youth, of a powerful house, this noble personage possessed too much authority and too great riches, as well as too many ways of satisfying his smallest caprices, not to abuse them. He wasted in a wild existence the passion of his soul, and spoiled in debauches, gambling and idleness, his really fine qualities. His mother mourned that at thirty years old he had not settled down to seriousness worthy of his rank. It was the last thing he cared for. The Adventurer Da Ponte wrote in May, 1793: "Count de Waldstein has carried on in London a very private existence. Poorly lodged, badly dressed, always in cabarets, brothels, cafés, with some porters, scamps, with . . . leave out the rest. He has the heart of an angel, and excellent intentions, but a head very much worse than our own." * The same Da Ponte tells us also that Waldstein, at Paris, attempted to assist in organizing the plan of Louis XVI.'s flight, and attempted to save the Princess de Lamballe. A mixture of bravery and of weakness, of nicety and of carelessness, of pride and of shame, such was the last protector of Casanova. No one could have been better designed to help, understand, excuse, and admire so pleasant an original.

* *Lettre à Casanova.*

The Castle of Dux, built in the French manner, in the carven style of classic art, spread its façades in such an elegant way that it produced, without any effort, the idea of grandeur. The happy proportion of its lines, the quiet of its ornamentation, the spreading plan, gave it a majestic attraction and a noble appearance. A real beauty which impressed by its harmony. It was the right dwelling for a very great lord, who loved to come there to forget the excitements of the world in the calm of this province, far from everywhere.

The library of the castle, lighted by huge windows, with little window-panes, is a very long room, *surbaissé*, under a vaulted roof, where peace seems to dwell. Forty thousand volumes, telling of it by their silent presence, pleasantly enlivened by morocco or calf bindings, gilt or tooled. It was an admirable refuge for a philosopher, who wished to live among his thoughts and his own works.

This splendid castle, at the end of an unknown country, was the last fatherland for Casanova, expelled by the whole of Europe, and this rich library his last shelter against his real enemies, who soon began to swarm in its neighbourhood also.

For the arrival of the Venetian stupefied the household. The servants, who, during the frequent absences of their master, had no other desire but idleness, eating and drinking, were disagreeably chagrined to have with them this thin old man, with bright eyes, interested in everything, who criticized all he saw, spoke to himself gesticulating as he walked, and treated every one from the height of his own self-creation, and from that of his own unrecognized importance. He rendered himself, moreover, a little

ridiculous, by his pretensions, his speech and his dress, his swagger, that of an old beau, and his old-fashioned bows. They were not long in letting him know that they regarded him, as, after all, a kind of servant. He put himself in the wrong, and exposed himself to their laughter by his impotent rages. From these early skirmishes, there arose between Casanova and the Intendant of the Castle, a continual conflict, underhand, exasperating, with pinpricking insults, curious dealings in relation to facts, degenerating into mean trickery and the worst outrages. The Librarian stamped with rage in showing almost daily that the bumpkins round him maddened him, and with a manifest satisfaction, succeeded in making his life impossible. These were horrible days! He was sick with rage, and thought for a moment of suicide. Disenchanted, acrimonious, bitter, he pitied himself. He was chagrined to feel himself reduced to the position almost of a servant, chagrined by finding himself treated as an equal by these countrymen, chagrined because he was poor, and because he was old. He carried a complaint to the syndic Löser, who laughed at him. He wrote to his friends, who made merry over his misadventures. He wrote to the Count de Waldstein, who smiled. He wrote to the Count's mother, who took refuge in evasions: "I pity you, Monsieur, for being obliged to live with such people, and in such disagreeable company, but my son will not forget what he owes to himself, and I am sure that he will give you such satisfaction as you may demand." * Exasperated by the malevolence or indifference of others, he put down his indignation

* Cf. Adnessé, *op. cit.* p. 92.

on paper. "They say that Dux is a delightful spot, and I see that it may be for many, but not for me. All that makes my old age pleasant, has nothing to do with the place I am living in. When I do not sleep, I dream, and when I am tired of dreaming, I cover sheets of paper with ink. Then I read it, and very often reject what my pen has out-poured." *

Yes, his life was ending in the midst of *ennui* and regrets. However, it is not necessary to be influenced too much by certain appreciations, too much quoted, of the Prince de Ligne, and so to imagine that the last days of Casanova were entirely spent in fighting, without success, against the *maître d'hôtel* Feltkirchner, the syndic Löser, the doctor O'Reilly, the courier Wiederholt, Caroline the wardrobe Woman, and some other subordinates. Their odious sneers, their stupid ill will, exalted him in his own eyes. He thought, very rightly, that as he was misunderstood by these servitors, he was of very much greater value than they. He had, moreover, a thousand better ways of employing his time than in the stupid trifles of domestic disputes.

And also, "When Waldstein was at Dux, life was very pleasant for Casanova. He had a place each day at the great Table, which flattered his pride to the full, and allowed him to satisfy his appetite, still robust, and his inveterate *gourmandise*. He was at all the entertainments, and basked with pleasure in this princely luxury, in which he found the polished manners, and again the savour of French elegance, of which the memory was dear to him. His native wit, which was still with him, the

* A. Rava. *Studl Casanovians*.

certainty of his wonderful memory, the irresistible charm with which he told a thousand anecdotes, made him the hero of these pleasant parties. It was necessary for him to shine still to get some pleasure out of existence, so he shone—and was happy.” *

Besides, what made his real pleasures in his old age, independent of the place he inhabited, were his studies. During his turbulent life, he had not always been able to satisfy as much as he would have wished, his love of letters, science, and philosophy. But at Dux, in his quiet library so rich in treasures, he recovered his zeal. He published, in 1786, the *Soliloque d'un penseur*; in 1788, *L'Icosaméron* or *Histoire d'Edouard et d'Elizabeth qui passerent quatre vingt ans chez les Mégamicros, habitants aborigènes du Protocosme, dans l'intérieur de notre globe*, a strange medley of adventures, of philosophy, metaphysics, theology, and satire, and many other topics yet, one of which was the question of employing asphyxiating gases in wartime. In 1788, again *L'Histoire de ma Fuite des prisons de la République de Venise qu'on appelle les Plombs*; in 1790, two little works on mathematics: *Solution de Problème Déliant démontrée* and *Deux Corollaires à la duplication de l'hexaèdre*; in 1797, another brochure *Lettre à Léonard Snetlage*, in which philosophy mingles with morals. But all these are as nothing to the mass of unpublished MSS. of which most are still at Dux.† His bright intelligence, vast erudition, ease of assimilation, as well as of impression, allowed him to write on the most varied subjects.

* Ch. Samaran, *op. cit.* p. 426.

† Mahlev; *Catalogue des Manuscrits de Casanova conservés à la bibliothèque de Dux* (*Revue des bibliothèques*, 1905).

He kept up also a large correspondence with people of importance and of varied merit, the Comte and the Comtesse de Lamberg, the Prince de Ligne, the Princess Clari, Prince Belozelski, Russian Ambassador at Dresden, Count Koenig, the Princess Lobkowitz, Opitz, Da Ponte, Zaguri, Memmo, the Abbé della Lena, Francesca Buschini, his last Venetian love, Cecilia Roggendorf, and Elisa von der Recke, the friends of his last days, etc., etc. Did he not write in January, 1793, a letter * of a hundred and twenty folio pages to Robespierre to express his indignation to him on the subject of the events that were happening in France? He also received at Dux many personal visits from friends of Count de Waldstein, or of strangers drawn thither by the treasures of the library. His works, his enormous correspondence, and the relations in which he was placed, allowed him to forget very often the disagreeables of his daily life.

But his greatest delight, and his most agreeable work, was the writing of his *Mémoires*. These transported him far from Dux, from poverty and from age, into many ways, into many towns, into all the countries which had seen his exploits, his love affairs, his successes and the extraordinary adventures of his lost youth, his distinguished middle life, and his sudden decline. He worked with fervour. During his whole life he had accumulated materials necessary for this work, letters from women, from friends, from enemies, every kind of document, and notes taken on the spot.

* This letter has disappeared; whether it was ever really sent, or whether it was destroyed through prudence. See on this subject Adnesse, *op. cit.* p. 97.

His *Mémoires* were already begun in 1791. In 1798, a little before his death, he gave them a new revision. He wrote with delight his own story, followed it with passion, and handled it with tenderness. It was a resurrection of his own self, and to Casanova nothing in the world counted as much as Casanova. Over the pages of his long manuscript he saw his own pleasant shadow pass; he admired, he adored himself, it made him sentimental, and amused him without end. Occasionally seized by scruples about his past, he pretended to burn his *Mémoires*. Not likely! Why should he dream of that kind of suicide? "You surpass Montaigne," the Prince de Ligne wrote to him. In 1797 he decided to put the first volume into the printer's hands. Unfortunately, his death came between, and the work had a different history.

His reputation as a writer, as a thinker, and as a savant, and that ease of dealing with all subjects happily, that audacious idea, his also, of mixing with the wisdom and love of letters of his old age the resurrection of his adventurous past, excited the admiration of many men. To those interested in him the clear-minded old man seemed to be an extraordinary being. "I have found in him," wrote Opitz, at the beginning of his friendship with Casanova, "a man worthy of our consideration and our affection, a kindly philosopher, whose real country is the vastness of the whole world (and not only the State of Venice) and who in a king esteems only the man." Count de Lamberg cited him as "a man known in literature, and of profound knowledge." The Prince de Ligne, whose admiration was always like a whirlwind, says, "Casanova has a

mind without an equal, of whom each word is a feature, and each thought a book!" So Theresa Boisson de Queney, the wife of another notorious adventurer, wrote to him, "I have long wished to express a great desire to bear witness of your mind and your other eminent qualities. . . . Your amiable compliments to me make me take up my pen to renew my assurance that in me you have a sincere admirer of your great talents. . . . When I wish to cite a person who writes and thinks excellently, I give the name of M. Casanova." One could collect from here and there other expressions of admiration and respect, and he himself received very many more which we shall never know. Thanks to them he must have been delighted, and to be made by them to forget sometimes his fallen state and the bitterness of old age. He had attained celebrity, and obtained the rank and consideration of one of the *élite*. Unable now to participate in the too quick movement of the world, he was satisfied to adopt the attitude of a sage. When he thought about himself, he could not help comparing himself to those antique philosophers who, superior to human frivolities, despised the stupidity of the ignorant, as the few truly instructed in a crowd of uninstructed, for he always pushed all his ideas to extremes.

In former times he had paid a visit to Voltaire at Délices. Of that meeting he preserved a profound impression. Its memory remained with him. The famous old man appeared in his solitude more courted and bepraised than the most glorious king in the most brilliant of courts. He had seen him crabbed and charming, familiar yet proud, a tyrant or yielding, slighting some, favouring others, furious

at a trifle, yet bearing a catastrophe quietly. The careful ruler of the smallest details of his household, yet directing the thoughts of the world. Always more active, more enthusiastic and younger as his years grew on him. Casanova knew that this life, in which he had taken a part for a moment, had continued brilliantly at Ferney. He did not love Voltaire, but he was jealous of the Patriarch of Ferney. Yet, in their respective positions there were certain similarities. Was not one exiled ? So was the other ! Had not both to flee their country ? Had not each put himself outside the law ? Had not both, with their journalistic meddling, their wit, and withal, their activity of mind, high culture and great ideas, that bright mental flame which might be that of genius ? Like Voltaire, had our hero not let loose jealousies, calumnies and wrath, and yet created sympathy and love ? To Casanova without doubt the Patriarch of Dux made a pair with the Patriarch of Ferney.

This was the last aspect of our Adventurer, and the last halt of his personality.

Casanova fell ill at the beginning of 1798. Quite quickly his symptoms became worse, and their gravity showed that the end would be sudden. He understood this, and told his friends. "With true sympathy and grief, I have heard of the stroke which has struck you down," wrote Zaguri to him. Elisa von der Recke wrote, "Your letter, my friend, has touched me profoundly. Although very ill myself, the first good day will bring me yet across the world to your side." Some sent him medicines, some tried to satisfy his fancies. The Comtesse de Montboissier, daughter of Malesherbes, and her husband, came to

see him. He received every day evidences of friendship and devotion which sweetened his last days.

What thoughts ought he to have had at the end of his curious career? The Prince de Ligne says that he exclaimed, "I have lived as a philosopher, I die as a Christian." It is difficult to believe this, like most of the striking words that legend puts into the mouths of the dying. Resignation was not in his nature. He, who jibbed at so many constraints, would surely revolt before the last and the most inexorable. If he was conscious at his death, one would imagine that the dying pleasure-seeker would be immersed in the immense regret of leaving for ever the fever and the tumult of existence. "Life (in his words, written some time before) is the sole thing that a man really possesses" (Preface 13). Although difficult, hard or unpleasant, it is always delightful, or at least, interesting. "Life is a wench that one loves, to whom we allow any condition in the world, so long as she does not leave us."* If he really exclaimed the words given us by the Prince de Ligne, it was the very last, and a false way of "showing off."

He breathed his last June 4, 1798. He was buried, most likely, in the cemetery at Dux, from where his tomb has disappeared. There only stands a small stone in remembrance of him, built up in the outside wall of the Chapel of St. Barbara, and bearing only his name with the places and dates of his birth and death.

It is very slight. His admirers have little imagination. We should like to see arise a medallion in bas-relief, with his fine features surrounded with

* *Histoire de ma fuite*, Avant-propos, p. 7.

symbolic attributes, the Venetian mask, the furnace of the alchemist, the prisoner's jug, the postillion's whip, the player's dice, the book and quill pen, all supported by a pedestal on which would play in marble, a dance of charming little *amorini*, with impudent laughter, eyes which saw too much, and of whom the fat torso would end in the hairy thighs and the cloven hoof of the satyrs.

HIS LIKENESS AND PSYCHOLOGY

I

PORTRAITS

“A dubious character, mixed and involved, an enigma; a question almost unsolved.”—LA BRUYÈRE.

PORTRAITS of Casanova are rare.

His perpetual motion gave him too little leisure for them. To him the hours were short and time precious. Doubtless he thought he was employing himself better than sitting still before a painter or sketcher. He was moving about during the greater part of his life, and remained almost unsketchable after death. Alas! Where are now the two miniatures which he had gallantly sent to the two beautiful nuns whom he loved at Murano?

At present, we only know his features by a bad painting and a mediocre engraving, the first sketched by his brother, Francesco, was a part of the Daschkof Collection * at St. Petersburg; the second, by Berka,† ornamented the *Icosaméron*. In one of them he seems to us too young, and in the other too old,‡ the portrait in the Daschkof

* Casanova had known at St. Petersburg in 1763 and 1764, the Princess Daschkof, friend and accomplice of Catherine II.

† Berka (1758–1815), a Bohemian engraver.

‡ There exists also a bust at the Castle of Waldstein, but one does not know if it is that of Giacomo or Francesco Casanova, or perhaps neither.

Collection * not too carefully executed between 1751 and 1753, at Paris, or more likely, at Dresden. During that period, the two brothers lived side by side at Dresden specially. They lived near their mother, a quiet and almost family life. "The life I lived at Dresden," wrote Giacomo, "was in all things quite ordinary." We know from the *Mémoires* that Francesco employed his time there improving his technique in painting. The portrait we speak of was only a study, a profitable amusement, to which the Adventurer lent himself as a model. He was then aged twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

This portrait, side-face, consists but of the head and part of the bust. Since it reveals a Casanova incompletely moulded by the world, it creates in us a feeling of surprise. The Adventurer is represented as well-dressed, elegant, sure of his good looks and of his superiority, but does it give us the impression of his tenacity, his craft, passion, indomitable will, his height and very uncommon endurance which was able to stand his constant excesses both at table and in love? We should have expected a more virile look, more assured, more imperious: the lively expression, however, is beautiful, the long lashes, the regular eyebrows, the long nose, slightly arched, but well designed, the sensual lips, the smooth brow, softened by the flowing curls of his wig; the firm

In fact, the straight nose, the too long upper lip, the drawn chin and the fatter figure, do not agree at all with the portraits of our Adventurer. Moreover, his dull look, his expression of fatigue, sadness and dullness, seem to have nothing in common with the brilliant look of our hero. This bust was reproduced in the wall by Salv. di Giacomo, *Historia della mia fuga*, and in the *l'Histoire de ma fuite* (Edition Moquet, Bordeaux).

* This portrait is reproduced in the work of Salv. di Giacomo already cited, and in the work of M. J. F. H. Adnesse, *Casanova après les Mémoires*.

cheeks, firm chin, the neck of a swelling slimness and of the delicacy of youth all give to his portraits a rather feminine look, an expression of slenderness, grace, awakened curiosity as at the edge of his initiation into life and pleasure. O, fine youth! We can understand that he didn't need much persuasion to please women. His looks spoke for themselves and easily explained his ease of success and his quick victories.

Yet, if we look closer at the face without letting ourselves be captivated by the good features that the painter, in his wish to please, may have exaggerated, the pose is theatrical. One sees stiffness in the attitude. To make himself look better, the eyes are too wide open and too fixed. The pose of the head projected forward alters the sharp line of the nose and diminishes also the width of the forehead where it begins to retreat. The thick nostrils seem vulgar, the mouth dubious, and the chin threatening. As a whole, the good-looking fellow is not too alluring. He could not hide, under the charm of youth and of manners, either his original imperfections or his eager desire to show off, to parade, to gratify himself by any way or whatsoever means. And thus, this portrait already shows to us the whole of the complexity, seductive and revolting, of the character of Casanova.

The engraving of Berka * represents the Venetian about the end of his adventurous career, when he was about sixty-three years of age. It was the time of his failure, his reverses, and his poverty. It was

* It is reproduced in the reissue of *l'Histoire de ma fuite* (Bordeaux 1884). In the book of M. J. F. H. Adnesse, and in that of S. di Giacomo.

especially the period of his old age and his haunting regrets for past times.

"Few men know how to grow old," asserts La Rochefoucauld. This portrait was too true, unfortunately! Casanova must have contemplated it often with a melancholy mixed with despair. And the bitter lines which he placed under the engraving became the sad song of his decline:—

*"Altera nunc rerum facies : me quero : nec adsum.
Non sum qui fueram non putor esse : fui."*

Yes, it is another countenance. Almost another personality. This is lined by tribulations, wrinkled deeply. The neck is thin, the shoulders have fallen under the weight of his destiny. A disenchanting grin tortures the mouth now less grim at the corners. Under the denuded forehead, the arched nose, the lips, now so thin, the hollow cheeks, appears the skull bones as if already the skeleton began to put off its useless covering of flesh, as death called more loudly. How terrible and desolate for a free liver so vehemently attached to all the good things of this world!

But if he is haunted by the knowledge of his decline, this man does not try the less to keep up appearances. His head is still held in a combative attitude, his eye shines with arrogance and pride. Being no longer able to shine as the Adventurer of pleasure, Casanova became the Adventurer of wit. Had he not written the *Icosaméron*, by which he thought at least to rival Voltaire? Had he not had successes in literature, the drama, science, history, philosophy, and had he not absorbed with ease the whole of polite knowledge? Wealth and beauty are gone! Knowledge is all that remains

with experience and wisdom. It is now more than ever that he clung to the thought of sublimity, and this forced him to believe in his genius. All had crumbled round him ; he had seen his desires, his projects, his dreams fall one by one ; he had been forced to renounce pleasure and the independence dear to him, to forsake everything which had seemed to constitute the interest and motive of his life, but not vexations and disasters, nor the hard lessons of age were able to diminish his unconquerable and unalterable and eternal vanity. So the pitiable old man galvanized himself into an attitude of his lost swagger.

Although they are insufficient, these two portraits do assist us in a real way on the physical appearance of Casanova, and show us the perspective of his soul. They bring together certain hints scattered through the *Mémoires*, and in the writings of certain contemporaries, and they allow us to examine with precision the principal features of the hero at different halting-places of his life.

The agreeable, though sharp and decided, expression of the St. Petersburg portrait, agrees very well with the spruce young clerk who, at the age of fifteen, pushed himself into the world of the higher Venetians. It illustrates better still the page on which Casanova painted himself arriving at Rome, aged about eighteen, to make his way there at the Papal Court :—

“ I was now at Rome, well dressed, with a purse tolerably well lined, with some jewels, provided with some experience also and with good letters of recommendation, absolutely free, and of an age when a

young man may count on his fortune if he has a little courage and an appearance which speaks in his favour to the persons he comes before. I was not handsome, but something rather more valuable, a certain indescribable quality which forced friendliness on me, and I felt myself equal to anything" (i. 223).

Some months later, raised up by the prestige of a smart uniform, that good appearance is enlivened by naïve and juvenile arrogance.

"My uniform was white, the waistcoat blue, with a shoulder knot of gold and silver, and a sword-knot of the same. I provided myself with a long sword. My fine cane in my hand, my hat well dressed with a black cockade, and with a long pigtail of false hair, I went out to make the round of the town" (i. 323). What excellent deportment and what delightful self-conceit !

But two years later, after luck of both kinds and of wider experience, the downy cheeks of youth came to an end. Our Adventurer at twenty-one, at the moment when, owing to the protection and allowances of the Senator Bragadin, led at Venice a riotous life. Features stiffen, his personality gets firmer. The unrestrained ardour of a temperament which has no regard for any constraint and despised all prudence, boiled in a heart which wished to be entirely free and cared for no obstacle. The impetuous reveller saw nothing but his own satisfaction. It mattered not if it did harm to others ; their jealousy, rage, and hatred were indifferent to him. He did not care. The following short extract shows this inaction in all its wild wantonness :—

"Sufficiently rich, endowed by nature with a handsome and imposing figure, an inveterate gambler,

a true spendthrift, a great and trenchant conversationalist, nothing if not direct, intrepid, running after pretty women, cutting out any rivals, not taking the trouble to know anyone but those who amused me, I could not but be hated, but I was always ready for a fight. I believed everything could be done, lawful or the reverse, for it seemed to me that a prejudice that came in my way ought to be broken down " (i. 473).

At twenty-eight, after a long sojourn in France, Germany, and Austria, he returned to Venice more mad yet in audacity and rashness. He recounts it not without boasting:—

" I returned * to my country in the year 1753. Brilliant, very self-centred, rash, pleasure-loving, an enemy of prudence, speaking about anything I felt, gay, wild, strong, mocking, with the clique of friends (I was their gonfalconier or chief) at anything that appeared foolish, whether this was sacred or profane, calling everything that was not known to aboriginal man ' prejudice.' Gambling hard, making night into day, and not respecting the word ' honour ' in the least, though it was for ever on my lips more by pride than belief in it, ready to guarantee my own honour from any stain, yet violating all its laws, which would have been able to have forbidden me satisfaction, damages, or revenge by all means which had the appearance of insult or violence."

What he styles " honour " is excessive self-love and a very shaded susceptibility, which raised up round him the worst hatreds. The Abbé Chiari, his dearest enemy, expressed the sentiments of the

* *Histoire de ma fuite*, p. 11.

majority by painting Casanova in these bitter colours : *—

“ We don’t know the origin of the M. Vanasio (that is Casanova), but he is said to be a bastard. He has a good figure, has an olive complexion. His manners are affected and his assurance incredible. He is one of those stars which shine in Society, though no one knows from whence they gain their splendour ; neither what they live on, or how they live without doing anything, having no wealth in the world, no employment, no qualifications ; infatuated almost to madness for all that comes from foreign parts. He talks always about London and Paris only, as if, outside these famous capitals, nothing else existed. In fact, he did live there some time, I do not know in what way or with what success. London and Paris enter into all his conversation. London and Paris are his models for his mode of life, for his clothes, for his studies, in a word for all his foolishness ; always dressed up like Narcissus, he cocks himself up. A balloon is not more puffed out with air than he himself with vanity, a mill-wheel is not more agitated. He turns himself hither and thither without ceasing. He makes love to all the ladies. He seizes ever favourable occasions to get money for himself, or to gain an amorous advantage to get himself on. Among the greedy, he poses as an alchemist, among the ladies as a poet, among great men as a politician, with others all things.”

The Prince de Ligne confirms the preceding appreciation, and in his turn traces the portrait of the Adventurer at the time of his mad youth :—

“ Epigrams, songs, loose words, indiscretions, attacks on the Government. All these Casanova

* *Commediante in fortuna*, ii. 130. Cf. Ch. Samaran ; *Jacques Casanova, vénétien*, p. 105.

permitted himself, stopping at nothing. Love, jealousy, imprudence, rope-ladders, gondoliers bought over, adventures of every kind, Casanova played the lord in a habit of grey lustring eked out with handsome *point d'Espagne* in silver, just as he wore in his hat a feather and his breeches of cramoisie silk, just as he was represented at the beginning of his work of *The Flight from the Piombi*." *

He "played the lord" with a greater air yet when after his escape he traversed Europe with a brilliant appearance, and concealed under seeming wealth his doubtful enterprises.

"He told people I was rich, and I seemed to be. My luxury was striking, my rings, snuff boxes, my diamond watch chain, my cross of diamonds and rubies which I wore saltire-wise on a flame-coloured riband. All this gave me the air of an important great man" (v. 236).

He was then thirty-seven. He was intoxicated with his extraordinary success, and continued to profit by his fame. Alas! this fair dream began to break up and life to become hard. From this time we discover a Casanova, now in distress and fighting inch by inch against evil fortune. In 1770, Alessandro Verri wrote to his brother Pietro that he had seen at Rome "a man famous by his adventures, the Sieur Casanova, a Venetian, full of wit and vivacity although very poor." Next year he was still interested in him, still extravagant, needy, dis-

* The Prince de Ligne alluded to an illustration by Berka which ornamented *l'Histoire de ma fuite*. This engraving represents Casanova at the moment when, prisoner of *Messer Grande*, he is brought to the Ducal Palace before the Inquisitors of State. The latter hands over the Adventurer to the gaoler, Lorenzo, saying, "E quello; mettetelo la deposito." This picture is purely imaginary.

credited, but as dangerous for other people's money, and he narrates how the Adventurer, by some striking pretence, got twenty sequins from the purse of an excellent ecclesiastic.*

In 1772, Bandiera, Resident of the Republic of Ancona, informed the Council of Ten of the presence of Casanova in that city. His report is full of interest:—

“He who was so rebellious at the justice of the August Council comes and goes in every place with a stalwart look, head carried high, and with a good equipage. He is received in many houses. . . . He is a man of about forty or more, tall in stature, good looking, vigorous, very brown in colour, with a lively eye. He wears a short wig of chestnut colour. They say he is proud and disdainful. He talks a great deal, and his conversation is learned and delightful.” †

Always he had the same animation, the same means of impressing and making himself esteemed. Always the same way and the same vigour. He was nearly fifty and yet people said he was forty.

Yet the ageing of the features drawn by Berka little by little overran his whole face. But he did not wish to allow himself to give up.

At Venice, about 1780, in spite of ruin, adversity, and humiliations, one sees him make a parade in old clothes bought at a bargain from the pawn-broker Abraham. ‡

* *Lettres des frères Verri*. See Salv. di Giacomo, *op. cit.* pp. 184 *et seq.*

† Letter of information sent by Giorgio M. Bandiera, Resident of the (Venetian) Republic at Ancona to the very illustrious Juan Zon, Secretary of the Council of Ten at Venice, October 2, 1722. Cf. Salv. di Giacomo, *op. cit.* p. 189.

‡ *Lettres de Francesca Buschini*, cf. Adnesse, p. 33.

During his last years, wrinkled and persecuted and angry, he still preserved in certain directions the zeal for living and the desire to impress himself. The wife of Da Ponte was astonished at "the eloquence, the loquacity, the vivacity, and all the manners of this extraordinary old man." * The Prince de Ligne wrote to him, "No one is ever old with your heart, with your genius, or your appetite." † And he tells us, moreover, "The mothers of the village are pitying themselves as Casanova comes to find out the silly ways of all their young girls." ‡ No, Casanova did not intend to renounce his position as Casanova, and remained Casanova to the end. Witness the essential fragments of the portrait which the Prince de Ligne traced of our Adventurer then in refuge at Dux. The dried-up features, rather sinister, in Berka's drawing, become animated little by little, and either contract in bitterness or extend in a smile.

"He is a very fine man, had he not been ugly ; he is tall, built like a Hercules, with a mulatto colour, eager eyes full of the knowledge of truth, but showing also susceptibility, unrest, or indignation, which gives them a fierce air. It is more easy to excite him to wrath than gaiety. He himself laughs little, but he makes others laugh. . . . He is wise and grateful, but to one who has displeased him even in a small thing, he is savage, grumpy, and horrid. If you gave him a million, it would not buy back a funny thing said against him. . . . He desires, he covets everything, and after having enjoyed everything, he knows how to make everything gratify

* Da Ponte, *Mémoires*, ii. 17. Cf. Ph. Monnier, *Venise au XVIII^e siècle*, p. 306.

† Cf. Ph. Monnier, *op. cit.* p. 313. ‡ *Mémoires du Prince de Ligne*

him. Women and girls are always in his brain. No longer able to be a god in the garden, or a satyr in the forest, he is a wolf at the table. . . . He is proud because he is nothing and has nothing. But one does not contradict him, or, above all, laugh at him, when one reads him or when one listens to him, for his self-respect is always in arms. Do not forget to salute him, for by a mere nothing you would then make an enemy." *

All these portraits, so varied in origin, resemble each other a little. Whether they are drawn by the brush of a painter, or an engraver's line, whether they come from the pen of an enemy, of a stranger, or of Casanova himself, they show us the appearance of the Adventurer, the details of his features, his costume, or they interpret his soul for us. They may have arisen from a confession, a satire, a piece of gossip or an official report. They may show us the subject decked out in his juvenile graces, resplendent in the fame of his fortune, or biting his bridle in his decline. They all agree, all represent him ; each makes clear in its own way the characteristics of that original character and of his impetuous temperament.

One can marshal these separate documents.

Casanova was tall. Besides the unanimous testimony that we have given already, he has left himself his own height. During his first visit to Paris, having met at the house of the actress, Silvia, the Tragedian Crébillon, he wrote with admiration, though slightly in envy :—

“Crébillon was a colossus. He was six feet high, taller than myself by three inches” (ii. 205). In

* *Mémoires du Prince de Ligne.*

another work he tells that he measured five feet nine inches.* The foot was equal to 0·32484 m.; the inch was the twelfth part of the foot. That makes the height of Casanova 1·86 m. This high stature contributed greatly to his success and his prestige; it gave him that “imposing figure” from which he often benefited, as it inspired respect, fear, and admiration.

Besides that, a fine person, good proportions, agility, slimness, and graceful ease. About his face, besides his long nose, two things struck the observer at the same time: his complexion and his look. His colour descending from a Spanish ancestor was very striking, of an olive brown, which no blush or pallor could alter. The true colour for an adventurer, and of a traveller also, burned by the suns, hardened by the changes of weather, salted by the sprays, and weather-beaten by the winds. It was a striking colour which impressed people. Casanova gained the name of “Goulenoire” from it in the gibberish half French, half Italian of his enemy Passano,† but to which he owed, on the other hand, the caressing names from the lovely “M. M.”—“Mon cher brunet,” and “Mon charmant brunet” (ii. 430–431).

Out of this dark skin his eyes shone with greater brilliancy. They were very fine, large, well shaped, lively, extraordinarily expressive, full of intelligence, vivid, and passionate; coming spontaneously from a turbulent soul, his glance showed with true Italian plenitude his sympathy or hatred, affection or rages. But it was not only subconscious; it became a trick

* *Histoire de ma fuite* . . . p. 28. (This was tall for an Italian of his period.—Translator's note.)

† *Lettres de Passano à Mme. d'Urfé*, discovered in the *Bibliothèque Municipale de Montbrison*, reported on by Ch. Samaran, *op. cit.* chap. XIII.

which the Adventurer excelled in expressing himself in. He was tender in love, inspired when practising Cabbala, proud when playing the grand Seigneur, sparkling with malice with men of wit, hot or cold in moments of defiance or inspection, his glance, with his happy expressions in speech, formed his best artifice for seduction.

His physical strength seems exceptional. But it was a supple strength due to well-trained muscles, as well as an accommodating nervous system. Casanova could play with fatigue. He could endure long tramps on foot, hard riding on horseback, interminable journeys in a carriage upon abominable roads. He could row with a wild zeal in the lagoons in a gondola threatened by a storm. He showed in one short night the most superhuman efforts necessitated for his flight from the Piombi. He could play at piquet for forty-two hours straight on until his adversary gave way. He could dance with brilliancy through the whole duration of a ball, hardly taking breath, and pass after tiring days, sleepless nights, by no means dreaming of the stars, but in a disconcerting number of amorous exploits. He carried on this quick career of an insatiable man of pleasure, from the University at Padua to the Library at Dux. He was capable of much more, too! To repair the physical wear and tear of his body which went through so much, he was lucky enough to possess an excellent digestion which could assimilate the most strange foods and be content with quantity when the quality was lacking. Gourmand by nature, but by no means particular, he showed himself something of a glutton, and was a copious feeder. "I loved the dishes with strong

flavours; the paté of macaroni cooked by a good Neapolitan cook, the *Olla podrida* of the Spaniards, the salt cod from Newfoundland, so glutinous, game with a gamey flavour, and the cheeses which begin to become perfect when the little mites which grow therein begin to become visible" (Preface 9). He could drink anyone down, no matter who.

He slept profoundly and calmly, like a child, uninterrupted by outside noise or personal troubles. From the moment he shut his eyes everything ceased for him, even danger. When perusing the *Mémoires*, we often meet a phrase like, "I slept for nine, ten, or twelve hours of deep sleep." Once, at St. Petersburg, he slept in one long go for thirty-two hours. During this happy unconsciousness his muscles relaxed, his nerves were calmed, his brain rested, and our hero awakened well, bright, and ready for new exploits and more excesses.

Thanks to this physical strength, which allowed no physiological or pathological damage, he enjoyed magnificent health. It was not lessened, except for suffering at times from hemorrhoids, and sometimes when Venus had betrayed him. He did not need false teeth until he was about sixty. The only serious illness which interrupted his adventures for a moment was when he contracted pneumonia at Aix-en-Provence in 1768, which left no bad effects. In later life he preserved the look of youth, and in extreme old age, that of maturity. He regarded rightly his splendid vigour as an inestimable advantage. "Health is the soul of life," he wrote to Opitz. Like most strong people, he feared illness, and showed himself devoid of stoicism before it. He had learned (at the University of Padua, most

likely) certain general principles of medicine, of which one of the strangest was to avoid doctors. When, by chance, he was ill, he treated himself, and if by chance some surgeon was too officious in proposing to bleed or operate him, he sent him away by pointing a pistol at his head (ii. 293). He doctored himself, prescribed a strict diet and obeyed it, kept his bed or his room, falling back on his own society. Kindly nature and his strong constitution did the rest, and did it miraculously well.

Yes, assuredly Casanova was a splendid man, well-built, wonderfully healthy, strong, with everything about him functioning merrily. He could waste his strength without doing himself any harm. In spite of his vicissitudes, his disappointments, his rages and his wrinkles, he remained lively, quick on foot, heart, and thought to the last day of his extraordinary existence. "There are men," he writes, "who feel themselves young all their life. My happy constitution placed me among their number" (vi. 313).

II

HIS NATURAL GIFTS

WITH an attractive appearance, a strong form, with a mind both agile and powerful, when one examines this personality, so complex and rich from whatever angle, one is struck by the wonderful extent of his natural gifts.

Casanova possessed in the highest degree the qualities of the physical kind which went with his constitution. We have seen those already. He was a splendid male, of tall stature and proud look. He dominated by his appearance, his imperious countenance and his keen eye. But these more haughty qualities were immediately tempered by the ease of his carriage, the elegance of his manners, the good taste of his clothes, the expression of his great brilliant eyes, the charm of his varied expression. He showed spontaneous gaiety, vivacity, the spirit of those men who enjoy good health, good digestion and sleep soundly. Around his whole person there emanated an impression of swift strength, and a constant exhibition of the fine equal balance of his brain which always thought lucidly and a healthy body always at its disposal. Casanova, by his outward appearance alone, counted among those who reveal themselves at once and could not remain un-

noticed whatever might be their surroundings or circumstances.

Favoured by his good looks, ignorant of timidity, helped by a daring of good quality, he drew most attention when he put his social qualities in full play. They were the most happy and most agreeable.

Amiable, thoughtful, courteous, he knew very well how to keep the right distance, to address each one in the right way, to adapt himself to all kinds of circumstances. He had, moreover, much wit, a quick turn of wit, fine, amusing, happy in conversation, knowing its just values and good at quick thrusts. He had nothing of the halting thought that did so much harm to the unhappy Jean-Jacques. He expressed himself with ease, quickness, and originality. Ordinary words were not enough for him, for its terms were too ordinary or inexpressive ; his talk was decorated with quotations to embellish it, with striking Italian phrases, with slang which enlivened his descriptions. In speaking, he warmed to his subject, and emphasized his sentences with gesticulations, making them alive with action, or, on the other hand, affecting a marble impassability still more entertaining. Possessing in the highest degree the art of interesting, he transmitted to the mind of the listeners his conviction and his ardour. He employed the grand or pleasant phrase, the appropriate compliment, the flattering live poetry, the epigram which made you laugh at the right moment, and so knew well how to gain over his listeners and defend sometimes those absent whom they criticized. With all this, he wished to be of service, doing anything to satisfy a whim, to realize

a desire, to render a service, to recommend some one, or to protect them with his influence or help him with his money.

His generosity was real, and sometimes great. Misfortune touched him to the quick and he attempted to help the sufferers. "To assist kindly," he wrote, "has always had a charm for me and I have never neglected to essay to do it when there was an opportunity." This was true, he shows so many examples of it. Naturally sympathetic to the unfortunate he showed sometimes towards them a true kindness, not that which abounds in words and advice only, but that which is real, active, and fruitful in result.

On his own side he preserved a profound gratitude to the persons who had helped him, who had been interested in him and who had come to love him without hurting his wide-spreading susceptibility or his sensitive self-love. His grandmother, Farusi, M. de Bragadin, Mme. Manzoni, and the actress Silvia held sacred places in his heart and were always venerated.

Devoted to his friends, he shared their interests, associated himself with their schemes, helped on their love-affairs, vibrated in their hates, took their quarrels until the time when his mistrust sprang up. He was always a perfect comrade, an excellent boon companion, of one out for pleasure; full of go, gaiety, devil-may-care wit, good humoured, bon-vivant, his heart on his sleeve. Towards women, how ardent! Gallant, tender, passionate! In short, he held his place in society and in conversation with brilliancy, possessing every quality such as politeness, amiability and charm which make not only

a perfect man of the world but a very attractive personage whose first aspect is very sympathetic and particularly charming.

These brilliant social qualities contributed much to his success, but the more real gifts of his mind have excited the admiration of his contemporaries and insured his renown. If intelligence consists of the rapidity of the association of ideas, the quickness of understanding, the enlargement of information, the clearness of understanding and the aptitude in generalization, Casanova placed himself, without doubt, among the most intelligent men of his time. He possessed a brain wonderfully organized and rickly dowered. Doubtless he was not one of those robust thinkers who pursue one system for their whole life, develop it by profound studies and infinite labour and lead it to its ultimate conclusion. Casanova was by no means a Descartes, a Pascal, or an Auguste Comte. His ideas did not dominate his life. He accepted them ready made. His originality consisted in the suppleness of his cerebral organization, his astounding ease of assimilation and that kind of mental conjuring which allowed him to appropriate almost without knowing it, that which he had gleaned from almost every source. His ideas, he held in a helping hand, but he marked them with his individuality and associated them with conviction. With a gracefulness rather disconcerting and with no mean ability, he touched on every subject and explored every domain, from that of the lowest satire to that of transcendental mathematics. His long and inordinate career as Adventurer never hindered his culture or wit, nor even his intellectual work, correctly so called.

But he manifested, above all, the practical intelligence that applies itself to facts rather than to ideas, and utilizes for itself every moment of the ordinary day. It consisted in a special liveliness of wit conformed with a clear-sighted view of events and a special perspicacity which allowed him to judge clearly and to foresee rightly. This was the intelligence of business. In spite of the perpetual variation of his humour and of his existence, Casanova showed often to how high a degree he had attained in this. He might have gone very far in the course of realizing his prophecies, and might have built up a brilliant and solid future, if he could have restrained himself from the wildness of his temperament and his desire, always getting more devouring for money and pleasure ; and if he had exercised his talents in other directions than in swindling, in necromancy, and in theft, more or less disguised though it might be.

His intelligence was attended by a habit of quick observation.

An incessant and always a lively curiosity pushed on Casanova from his childhood to his extreme old age, into every society, every country, through books, among women, and into every kind of enterprise.

But curiosity satisfies itself and grows weary as soon as it has attained its end. Observation, on the other hand, formed by many excursions of curiosity with comparison of results, conclusions and deductions, continually renews itself. Casanova had not simple curiosity only, he was not content merely to look around him, he probed into the origins, the relations and the results of each phenomenon. He was a very penetrating observer.

His perspicacity exercised itself especially in its relations to his fellow-creatures. That is in the realm of observation in psychology. In the shortest time, he observed a person, took his measure, weighed his intellectual and moral value, examined his qualities or his morals or his hidden nature and drew from these ideas an appraising of his character and humours which was almost always correct. The least thing indicated to him ambition in one man, vanity or foolishness in others. The *Mémoires* are filled with portraits extremely clear and lively. Knowing how to appraise men and to distinguish the distinctive trait which was peculiar to their personality, he had no difficulty in finding out the phrase which described or the epithet which pointed it out. He was a physiognomist of the first rank.

He did not use his skill, moreover, only in gauging individuals. He essayed in the larger field of his investigations, and judged with a wonderful facility the mentality of a crowd, the thought that swayed a salon, the humour of a coterie, the manners of a city, and the temperament of a people. For him all things appertaining to man were of interest. Inquisitive in regard to usages, customs, to the multitudinous details of morals, always on the look-out for the hidden thought, the private sentiment, the unpremeditated deed, the reflex action, the sudden word, which unveiled the soul of a man or the genius of a people; he appeared a thought-reader either very malicious or very clever, who could penetrate magnificently the workings of the mind of man and of society. By using on every little occasion that wonderful faculty of analysis, he was acting for his own interest in everything that he probed to the

bottom, for he was able, according to circumstances, to flatter, dazzle, talk and be silent ; he was able to approve or banter, and inspire confidence or fear. It was to this clairvoyance that he owed the finest successes of his career and of his life.

A rich imagination enlivened his many natural qualities. It brought them into line, and allowed him to show himself off with brilliancy and to use for his own advantage his gifts of observation. It grouped together the objectives, and gave the inventive sources necessary to the success of the actual projects. Thanks to the precision and succinctness of his facility in action, Casanova easily saw through situations and identified himself with the different personages whom he desired to represent in his theatre of the world. He was like those excellent actors who, having removed their coat or their soft hat in the green room, become apparently new persons, who, by a laced sandal or a beribboned tunic become at once an Œdipus or a flesh-and-blood Alcestes. In the course of his years of adventure, Casanova in turn played Scarpin, Turcaret, Leander or Gérontius. It must not be forgotten that he was the son of a comedian and of an actress, that he frequented theatres his whole life long, and that besides all other talents, he himself appeared on the boards with success.

This ease in adapting himself to rôles of very different kinds astonishes us at first, but yields to analysis. Casanova's imagination was so strong as an incentive to acting, that it caused in him sometimes a dual personality. Given a situation, certain surroundings, certain wishes, *he saw himself*

beforehand, playing his part in the piece moving in the surroundings, and realizing his desires. Then, pursuing that vision of himself, he acted, moved, and gained the end as he had seen it in his mind's eye. With him, in some sort of way, his mind preceded his body; his words, actions, and deeds realized the words, actions, and deeds of the ideal type to which he has conformed so well that it has become none other than himself. His model consisted always of an anticipated vision of his own personality. Doubtless the circumstances were not always favourable to him, and sometimes unexpected obstacles came in his way, but his imagination was so quick and so lively, that if the imaginary puppet became unrealizable, or the attitude impossible, a new puppet or attitude, more pleasing to the surroundings, was substituted. He pretended often to follow the suggestions of his guardian genius. His genius was really nothing but that acting of his own self-conception constantly and ceaselessly adapting it to times and places.

There appeared to himself one day a Casanova, tightly girthed in the brilliant uniform of an officer, shoulders thrown back, legs straight, his hand resting on the hilt of a long sword. So he put on a brilliant uniform, threw back his shoulders, straightened his legs and clasped his sword hilt. Later, his great preoccupation was to gain a commission as Ensign in the Venetian army, so that time he at once, with the greatest ease, transformed himself into a handsome officer, as smart, as commanding, as outrageous and as detached from the obligations of discipline, and negligent of the duties of his profession as the most of his comrades.

To him there appeared a Casanova endowed with mysterious power, a friend of the supernal spirits, an investigator of occult mysteries, and all this for his own profit. So he studied the books of grammerie, invented strange formulæ, combined fantasies of figures, worked rites of initiation, made propitiatory gestures, and without unfolding much, has told the past and unfolded the present, and predicted the future to fill his own purse during his whole life, at the expense of fools.

Another time there appeared to him a Casanova, rich, a great gentleman, enjoying every fantasy, cultivating every pleasure, an elegant voluptuary, a dauntless gambler; therefore he found money, spent it royally, enjoyed unheard-of luxury, entertained himself with the most refined as well as the coarsest orgies, threw himself into the least expected enterprises, as well as the most hazardous, and for many years, made the roads of Europe ring with the noise of his carriage wheels, and the fame of his personality.

At last, in the Castle of Waldstein, appeared to him a Casanova superior to all displeasing circumstances, too learned not to suffer from envy, too much a philosopher to be understood by the common herd, disillusioned about everything beyond ordinary truth and right; so, without any effort he became at once Patriarch of Dux. Thus, his imagination furnished for him the plot itself of actuality and became the leading string of his life.

So, we must not think the imagination of Casanova was an unreal or a fantastic imagination. Quite the contrary. It was lively, audacious, but by no means unbridled. It very seldom brought our hero into

schemes he could not realize or fair speculations. It did not always create phantoms. Attended by that practical intelligence, and used to the psychologic observation which we have already noticed, it knew the need for remaining in the sphere of practical politics. The visions which it elaborated were based on facts and remained subject to the rules which sway facts. It worked the same way as the mind of a seeker creating a scientific hypothesis of which each portion is eternally subject to the immutable natural laws and governed by the knowledge that observation has given. The imagination of Casanova marched step by step or from station to station. To make new conquests it always relied on the gains it had already made. In this way are explained the long successes that seem so wonderful that one can hardly credit them. "Imagination," says J. J. Rousseau, "stretches as far as it possibly can." There is nothing so rigorously true as this in the case of Casanova.

But if the inception of an idea was not destitute of wisdom, it would be a great mistake to think it was always congealed in calculation. When he did not need to employ himself in the guarding and harbouring of his designs, and could allow himself to stroll about freely, his imagination was wonderfully impetuous, and played about among the most extravagant fantasies. Then it worked like the imagination of an artist who creates situations or types purely imaginary. It attained, in this attitude, a singular vivacity of imagination. Here is an example from among many.

Casanova was residing in the neighbourhood of Milan. He was taken to a convent of Penitents,

where, among other inmates, there had been shut up, by order of the Empress Maria Theresa,* a courtesan, famous for her beauty and successes. Casanova adored beautiful women liberal with their favours, and he hated Maria Theresa, who attempted to put down prostitution. How delightful it would therefore be to restore this woman to pleasure, and to release her to full liberty and a joyous career in the States of Austria! The idea, once conceived, his imagination went off at full gallop. "If I had had the good fortune to enter into Milan at the head of a victorious army, it is very sure that my first act would have been to release that unfortunate from the torture that a female-tyrant had condemned her to. I would have beaten with a horsewhip the fair-spoken Abbess, if she had tried to oppose my wishes" (v. 319). Yes! this is not only a development of rhetoric; Casanova imparts to us that which he really felt. On an ordinary incident where most would weave a romance, he places himself in an epic-poem. For a brief instant he has seen himself in imagination invading the Milanese as a conqueror. He has thrown himself off his horse at the door of the convent, has spoken to the Abbess, who has taken refuge in excuses. He has seized in his hands the terrified and screaming Abbess, her weight quivering for the horsewhip, and suddenly his arm has done the rest, he has struck the Abbess, tearful and terrified, and has heard the crack of the whip, and the rustling of her dress. He has felt for a few seconds the character of a just avenger, and likely, when writing out the scene, his fingers again clench

* Milan belonged to Austria from 1713 to 1796, according to the Treaty of Utrecht.

and clasp the pen fiercely, and his feet beat under the table. For his imaginative visions have so much reality that he preserved them intact ; neither events, nor distance of time were able to make themselves forgotten.

From these two varieties of imagination Casanova knew well how to benefit. The first, audacious but disciplined, gave him extraordinary success. The second, by its richness and its liveliness, increased his sensibility and his enjoyments. Both of them are shown without ceasing his whole life long, and added greatly to his especial charm. Imagination is the most delightful enlivener of youth, and this sprightly devil remained young all his life.

Casanova, moreover, was a man of action, from the day when he woke from the careless sleep of childhood to his extreme old age, he showed always the need of action and doing things. Good or bad didn't matter so long as something was being done. Idleness he felt to be a disgrace, quiet a calamity. His worst torture during his imprisonment before he arranged his flight was the idleness. His robust temperament, the multiplicity of his interests, his wealth of sensations, sentiments, and ideas gave him new fields for energy. It was necessary for him always to find outlets for that strong and turbulent force that was stored in his brain, his nerves, and his muscles.

But an act is the result due to the elaboration of determining influences. Between the moment when these influences are perceived by an organism, and the moment when that organism dies, there passes a moment, always more or less short, according to

the nature or the complexity of the elements in it. The reflex-action seems almost spontaneous. It comes seldom into the realm of physiology. The instinctive act itself is generally rapid, although more complicated, since it assures the preservation of the individual and his species. The voluntary act seems very much slower, a work of the brain, clear or obscure, always precedes it, and constitutes a psychological period of preparation during which the mind examines the different ways and means of the act, arranges the circumstances, and measures the advantages, disadvantages, and the consequences. After that work only the realization is achieved. Where the result that speculative minds, those who are accustomed to auto-observation in psychology and in whose minds the conscious borders without ceasing on the domain of the subconscious, those who bridle their passions, reflect with quietness and possess a vast imagination, these manifest often weak desires, they leave an act a long time in suspense, precisely because they have considered it under every view before accomplishing it, discovering always some new element for stopping it. Perhaps that rapidity in making up one's mind may be in inverse ratio to the lucidity of conceived idea, the length of action, and of the empire over passions.

Casanova was not by nature speculative; with him thought was reduced to a minimum; his decisions resulted from methods in general, very simple and very powerful, such as sensuality or self-esteem, and his actions were determined by a dominant passion which outside itself suppressed everything else. On the other hand, his imagina-

tion, we have seen, was most intense, but more definite than wide. He represented his own concept very vividly, and in an attitude so defined as not to allow other possibilities, and which created towards himself a kind of suggestion. Beyond this fixed outlook he saw no other end, and neither doubted himself nor his ultimate success. He never lost himself in doubts or hesitation. He did not believe they could exist. When he wished to do an action, one view alone opened before him and it led directly to that act. The field of his psychic and physical energy was occupied entirely by the act in process. "To do well," said his friend, the Prince de Ligne, "do not think, follow the motive given by instinct. Each one has his own; seize your own idea, it is by inspiration that you will be right and ought to act." It is to these proportions, in short, that deliberate thought diminished in Casanova. His appetites demanded immediate satisfaction. So there was no delay. He acted immediately, without stopping to consider superfluities, scruples, or doubts. The psychological incubation of the act became thus excessively short. Moreover, to the shortness of that preparatory period, the decision of his character was due. Casanova was, above everything a man of decision.

As soon as his mind was made up, he employed every resource, physical and intellectual, to realize it. He gave himself to it with a singular tenacity. "I have always believed that when a man intends to achieve a certain end, and if he thinks of nothing else, he ought to gain his end in spite of all the difficulties" (iii. 62). If fortune frowns or circumstances are difficult, one must avoid pursuing an

impossible end. The difficulty is to find out the moment when an enterprise becomes bad. Then it was that the gifts of intelligence or observation or that penetrating instinct which he possessed, so often showed themselves, and warned him when the project so much desired, was threatened with check-mate, and our Hero at once changed his tactics and renounced in a moment the desire he had so passionately conceived.

For while he was very quick, he was also very practical. This affirmation may seem a little paradoxical when it is used of a person who was considered to indulge in the most extravagant vagaries, and to whom people showed much indulgence as being, they thought, a little mad. He himself loved to give this impression, and he allowed them to believe that he was always dominated by a fiery temperament ; that this temperament sometimes played him bad turns is indisputable. But notice, he wished to attain his end, and taste of success. Then, and then only, he allowed himself whims. This was quite contrary to the usual conduct of his life. While he gave constant attention to the least circumstances, he tried paths, showing feints, ingenuity, and patience to get round an obstacle or remove a difficulty. What an amount of activity he used to attain his end ! He was practical in the use he put his good qualities so manifold. As a handsome fellow, he became a lady killer ; as a worldling he became useful in society. By his wish to help, and his kindness he gained friends, while by his intellectual resources applied to business, and his happy faculty of observation in seeing how things lay or what people thought, by his quickness and directness of action

in any circumstances, he showed himself, in spite of appearances, practical even in his wildest projects, in his most foolish schemes, and in his maddest successes.

He failed. Though he saw far, he could not, however, see far enough. Ceaselessly, he fought a keen fight with those whose place he wished, or against routine, prejudice, use, or law. Fortune, success, honours. All those idols he manœuvred for with such hot zeal. All these he failed to conquer in spite of innumerable attempts. Sprung from a low level, he attained, however, to a high plane. Owning nothing, he lived for many years in luxury, pleasure, and opulence. One does not do all this by pure luck, or by an exceptional series of happy coincidences. Other things are essential, especially the acute sense of reality and the happy use of events. To gain a fortune, to push one's way, in fact "to arrive," one must never turn up one's nose, nor enter into daily meannesses, nor of prolonged daily dullness, nor have petty quarrels or be pennywise. Our Adventurer knew this and had never forgotten it. Although the means he employed to get on might be fantastic, bizarre or striking, it is its own evidence, but these means were peculiar to him, and his own way only. Casanova possessed keen good sense mixed up in his extravagances. And this was perhaps the principal reason of his originality.

Of fine physical appearance, attractive, clear and acute, quick in imagination, of good judgment, decided, prompt in action, and of good sense at bottom. Such a rich collection of extra good qualities are rarely united in the same person, more

wonderful yet these good qualities balanced and aided instead of hindering each other ; for usually imaginative men are unpractical, and that thought is reflected by men of action. But all enriched Casanova. It would seem that a good quantity of good fairies must have met round his cradle, and that each bestowed on him some special and incomparable gift.

Given these exceptional qualities, we shall consider how he used them.

III

HIS VANITY AND EGOTISM

HE was too brilliantly endowed. He possessed incontestable aptitudes. The knowledge that he had then did him the greatest harm. From his earliest entry into life he wondered much at the rapidity with which he equalled and surpassed his fellow pupils. Then when introduced into a sphere, reputed higher, it was not long before he perceived that the men in it, well esteemed old men, ladies of high distinction, mere bearers of illustrious names and high-sounding titles, were in reality very small personages. Thanks to his perspicacity he found with ease the blot on the scutcheon or skeleton in the cupboard of each, ruining their ancient renown. He proved to his own satisfaction, that the intellects of those in power, the honour of the rulers, the wisdom of the savants, the reputations of artists, commercial probity and womanly virtue frequently reduced themselves to very slight realities. He saw around him nothing but indifference to good, dark hostility against truth, weakness, and mediocrity everywhere.

Why was he to bow his back to pursue a chimerical ideal to conquer unnecessary virtues? He felt himself full of force, activity, and of intelligence. It was best for him to play his cards to obtain

immediate and easy results. That which was difficult for others to accomplish was easy to him. The most difficult books he devoured with ardour, the most complicated kinds of knowledge he acquired as play. His admirable intellect laughed at every obstacle. Did he speak? persuasive words flowed from his lips. Did he write? verses were thrown off with ease on his sheet of paper. Did he lean towards some pretty woman's ear? What promising smiles responded to his whisper! Intoxicated by presumption he, still young, was able to say: "I felt myself superior to almost all my equals." His proofs so pessimistic about persons and society added weight to his optimism about himself. His cleverness forced him to believe in his own genius. Proud of his constitution and triumphant with his brain-power at once quick and great, he judged that he would be able always to trust to his inborn qualities without attempting to perfect them more-over since they assured his success in everything.

The ease of his first success gave him also an immovable assurance in himself. It took him an important stage towards his habitual contentment in himself; assuredly he knew sometimes misfortunes on his way, but his mode of thought was such that reverses never completely drove him to despair. If he suffered from a catastrophe he held that it was not his fault but that of fortune, that blind and dull-eyed divinity, the sole one that he appeared to fear, yet one whom he flattered himself he was able to lead at his good pleasure. When the wound of his self-esteem was healed up, the check only became for him an advertisement, an experience and a surety of future victory.

His confidence in his own value was absolute. All that he did seemed to him well done. He believed that he alone was capable of thinking logically and acting with discernment. The rest, in whatever high places they might be, he considered in general as timid creatures, imbeciles, or weaklings. It was easy to dominate the first, to dupe the second, and to use the last as cats'-paws to draw the chestnuts out of the fire by flattering their fancies at the right time.

Moreover he applied himself to become intimate with mediocrities. If he by chance met a strong man, with a forceful energetic will, he treated him with prudence and almost unconsciously, for if he loved a battle he did not like one the less if chance found itself diminished. He made friends with easy-going men, credulous or weak-willed. He frequented a world where he was certain of an easy domination, utilizing to his own good his too brilliant capacity. "I believe," he says, "that to pluck a fool is an exploit worthy of a man of spirit" (Preface, iv). His most brilliant coups were the results, really, of plots admirably gauged to the weaknesses of his victims. Only he mistook his expedients for great actions, his luck for real merit, his successes for legitimate reward. Infatuated with himself to an excessive degree he yielded without to the tickling of immeasurable vanity.

Casanova personifies the grand type of vain man. It was by vanity that all that was in him revolved and by it all can be explained and it was the pivot of his character, the axis of his personality, the centre round which everything revolved or came to a point.

It was vanity, not pride.

He had the satisfied look, the certain assurance and the flourishing expression of a vain man, the air of satisfaction and the lip that easily becomes scornful. His appearance was fine or magnificent. He laughed at those who pulled a long face at his dress and outward show. Poor creatures ! As if he had the dull minds of these, such as the moralist who wrote the celebrated apostrophe : * “ You deceive yourself, Philemon, if you think one makes more of you, on account of your brilliant equipage and the great many fools who follow the six horses which draw it. One strips off the grandeur which is strange to you and sees that you are only a fop.” But who does strip the grandeur off and see the poverty of the resplendent Philemon ? You, perhaps, Monsieur de la Bruyère, who are a wise sage and full of crochets. But the ordinary run of mortals, the hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands before whom Philemon treads his measure remain impressed by the gold lace on his clothes, by his embroideries and his ornaments, by the beauty of his watch, the onyx which forms the hilt of his sword, and by the large diamond which shines on his finger. Dress ? Why, it is by this that an individual is judged and places himself. It helps one’s physical beauty and gives grace and assurance to those who need their qualities. Other things being equal one thinks too often in this world that a well-dressed man has an advantage over one well born only. This is obviously a mistake, but if one by chance remembers that in the eighteenth century, as perhaps in other centuries, the majority of Society was composed of fools ? So Casanova profited by it.

* La Bruyère, *Du mérite personnel*.

His love of dress was excessive. First as a musk-scented little Abbé, then the lively officer, the seductive lover of many pretty women, the rich financier or the illusive traveller. He clothed himself on each occasion, if he could, with supreme care and according to the very latest fashion. It was the source of continual satisfaction! If he strutted about before others, he paraded equally before his own eyes, and looked at himself in all the mirrors. "I love to recall still the agreeable impression I made on my own eyes when I was able to examine myself at my own leisure in a good mirror. I was delighted with myself. I was simply astonished at the vision. . . ." He would need to have fallen very low not to be perfectly dressed. The man who did not blush at a bad action was ashamed to wear a coat out of date. At certain critical times when he was reduced to extremities and was wondering anxiously how he was to live through the next day, he yet did not fail to employ his last resources to dress himself more than well. Frederick II. said to him point-blank, "You are a fine-looking man, Monsieur Casanova." A compliment which gave a benediction to a long career of elegance, and obliged him to keep up his reputation. Therefore he took leave of his Prussian Majesty, "dressed head to foot in new clothes of purple taffeta, with rings on every finger, my two gold watches, and my cross." He showed, perhaps, too many rings, too many watches, and took a long time to learn that the renowned Cross of the Golden Spur brought him much chaff and little renown. His exaggerated luxury was too evident. He went to kiss the hand of the King of Naples clothed in rose-coloured velvet embroidered

with gold spangles, a very gentle colour which would show off by contrast his dark complexion and his athletic stature. Nay, more, this trait shows us a Casanova in holiday dress who does not allow himself to be a merry-maker. Yet he believed himself to be admirable and his "delight" continued.

He did not restrict himself entirely to his costumes when he arranged his wardrobe. With all the silliness of the fop, he made a fetish of underclothing. Did it not contribute to those triumphs so intoxicating and so delicious? Linen of beautiful Dutch weaving, fine nightcaps, delicate handkerchiefs and striking night gear took a great place in his thoughts. He used a hundred recipes to make his skin soft, his nails brilliant, his teeth white, his breath sweet. He knew infallible pastes, pomades of complicated origin, secret perfumes, baths and sweetmeats which controlled Love. What delightful subjects to talk of to a pretty woman and what a splendid recompense it was when he excited her astonishment and admiration by them!

But luxury in dress and jewels was not enough for him. He wished a display more striking and more lasting. A fine lodging richly furnished, a "folie," perfect servants. Before Mercier wrote it he knew that "Merit, talent, genius, and virtue are nothing while a man goes on foot," and again that "a carriage is the end that each man in the slippery road of fortune wishes to attain." *

He had two in Paris and did not hesitate to work his horses in spite of the vileness of the roads. Nothing was more delightful for him than to give a banquet where the excellence of the service, the

* Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*.

abundance of the dishes, the profusion of wines, disputed in beauty with the crystal and in richness with the silver-plate. He enjoyed without measure when, going through a town, he paid his respects as he had been accustomed to in that place, with the same state as if he had always been living in style there.

To focus attention and to be always in the forefront were the real purposes of his existence. On the world's stage he wished to act a great personage and not an inferior part either as a super or to appear merely in the chorus. He wished his personality always to have a line of its own. In a drawing-room he was successful by his elegance, charm, and wit. In the towns he lived in he surprised the inhabitants by his luxury, his whims, and his extravagances, in the inns he turned everything upside down by his train, his noise, his exigency. In amorous commerce he proved himself the most vigorous of mankind, and among rogues he could teach a thing or two to the most expert. Natural gifts, originality of manners, and curious ways of action were all employed in carrying out this "extraordinary" display. He ceaselessly was afraid of passing unnoticed, he neither hesitated to exalt his merit nor to pronounce everywhere his own eulogy. He was a braggart. He entertained the whole world with his doings, his love affairs and his projects. On the slightest occasion he put himself forward as an example, showed off his talents, his advantages, his superiority. To favour his success he knew how to act in his own interests. He never allowed himself to be shown up in an unpleasant position, and never avowed his unconquerable moral weakness. Continually pre-occupied by his reputation, he even took advantage

of his misdeeds when he feared with good reason that they might do him an injury. The evil that he had done he attached to some little act of no importance. He protected himself from its weighing him down or wrapped it up skilfully in an infinity of attenuating circumstances and specious pretexts.

He needed a public lively and active. He spoke and acted for nothing else. It was for his public that he was prodigal, doubled his stakes, and, smiling, lost vast sums. It was for his public, rather than for his interest that he executed his Cabbalistic plots, getting the mastery by a power unknown to all others. It was for this public, that almost always he showed himself generous and kind, and for it also he cultivated his wit and his memory, was a fine figure and also was brave.

And his public applauded. "Applause made me feel happiness" (i. 88). For them he had tried and sacrificed all. For him they provoked a complete intoxication. People have always represented Casanova as an unbridled joy-rider, always rushing to taste distractions, gaiety and joy, so that he was named "Chevalier de Plaisir." * It was an exact and delightful nickname ! But at the same time one must not forget that in his eyes his pleasure of the highest water, which dominated all others, and which included in itself all enjoyments, pleasures and successes, was the realization of his vanity.

He was like a bull-fighter in the ring, with crowds of spectators looking down he fought the adversary with an assured grace, a brave agility, he stunned it, wore it out, killed or beat it, and as the animal died, he redressed himself bright, fair, and glorious, took

* Ph. Monnier, *Venise au XVIII^e Siècle*, p. 314.

up a fine posture and saluted with a theatrical gesture the enthusiasm of the spectators, the noise of the applause and the shouting of "Vivas."

Drunk from applause, bewitched with flattering words, kind smiles, agreeable looks, and delightful compliments, Casanova lost his head. He lost above all things his standard. His habits became more rich, his jewels more numerous, his pretensions even higher. His confidence in himself became idiotic, in wildness he became the worst of boasters, the worst of bad actors. Pretentious, arrogant, unbearable, he had come to regard himself as the most knowing and the most captivating of men. One day, having astounded some foolish people by a Cabbalistic operation, which was really an immense imposture, he confides in us "... delighted with my rôle as magician in which I was astonished to find myself so adept" (ii. 70). Another time he managed to come across a pretty lady travelling with an old man and got round her, saying without wincing, "I was physically everything that could make a perfect lover" (ii. 97). At the moment when he was leaving for his first journey to Holland believing he held in his hand the destinies of the Kingdom, he declares, "Having informed Madame d'Urfé that I was going to Holland for the good of France . . ." (iii. 302). At last, after reading the Iliad and Odyssey for eight days of intensive study, he thought he had discovered curious sidelights, new and unpublished, which would revolutionize the commentators of Homer! His doings, his words, his thoughts, his enterprises, all that emanated from himself seemed sublime. His self-love became exaggerated into an obsession. His wisdom in all

things into foolishness. He became wild with vain-glory, ostentation, wild with insolence and impudence, wild enough to spoil for a moment's "triumph" the successes he had built up so patiently. His vanity, having become unrestrained, took upon itself all the elements of an unchained passion. It made him hateful and at the same time grotesque and put his finer qualities in the background. "If vanity does not reverse all the virtues, at least it makes them all totter." * It obscured also the clear sight which he had been wont to throw on men and on events. In the incessant struggle during his life and especially his life of adventure, it carried away his means and lessened his chances and left him without arms in the presence of those spectators before whom he had so lately shown off. Thus we see the same bull-fighter who yesterday accepted with neck thrown back the triumphal ovation, to-morrow if he has trusted too much to himself, had made a wrong stroke, a false pass, a slip, or allowed himself to be surprised by the bull in its fury, run panting round the arena, or flee ruined, followed by the shouts, the jeers, and the hisses of the crowd.

These falls were cruel to Casanova, but he was Casanova, that is to say he was a man with phoenix-like resurrections. By vanity alone he rose always from his ashes to amuse himself indefinitely with boasting and bragging. "The most violent passions," says La Rochefoucauld, "sometimes allow us a rest, but vanity agitates us always."

To this insatiable vanity, our Adventurer conjoined an unworthy egotism, To speak plainly,

* La Rochefoucauld.

do we not know a Casanova worthy of esteem for his kindness, his indulgence, his generosity? Do we not know him capable of devotion? Did he not write at the end of his life, "It is so pleasant to do some good, that now that I have nothing more to give, the remembrance of the happiness that I have caused, often at little expense, is almost the only pleasure left to me"? (iv. 464). But we also know him as an excellent actor, loving to extol everywhere the sensibility of his soul and never hesitating to draw from the tearful attitude some good effects. What man does not bring together contrasts and contradictions? If one analyses, his generosity seems an accident when it does not come from calculation. Egotism is the real bedrock of his nature.

He was an egotist profoundly and intensely. He attracted to himself for his own use, all that he could gain in the world of usefulness or in that of pleasure. His personality became his object of worship, his own end and aim became the only things in which he was interested. At the end of his life he wrote to Opitz with a cynicism ornamented by fine language, "I see without blushing that I love myself more than anyone, but please note that I blush because I do not blush, and that secondary flush justifies me towards myself, for about other people I do not trouble." * He need not have waited till he was sixty years of age to have made that statement.

Doubtless every living being has the right to be certain of the powers of his organism and the expansion of his personality, it is a condition necessary to his preservation, a legitimate necessity and a right. So, as man lives in a Society he can ask assistance and

* Letter to Opitz, July 11, 1791.

protection from his equals. But in his own turn he assumes the duty to help and to protect them also according to his power, and thus the particular good merges in that of the public.

The egotist claims his rights and refuses to acknowledge his duties. He takes all but wishes to give nothing. He is like the miser who hoards gold in his coffers without letting it increase and who does not see that in acting so he does wrong to every one and especially to himself, for that gold made to circulate would make him much more rich by helping labour and the products of others. The egotist wishes to forget the great law of exchange. It is for himself alone that he cramps his horizon, it is for himself alone that he concentrates the whole result of his own activity and all that he has snatched from the activity of others. He loses the bright light that shines in the eye of the hero, that illuminates the halo of the saint, or in more simple words, merges in agreement with the lives of kindly people.

Everything contributed, it is true, to make Casanova the most perfect of all egotists. As a child he knew nothing but neglect around him, except perhaps for Marzia and M. Baffo, both too old to influence him. Among his companions, his masters and protectors, who was there to give as an example of disinterestedness or real charity? His contemporaries had sensibility and tears both easy and false, but in their hearts they were cold and hard. Thrown into the whirlpool of life without resources, without assistance, he tried to get what he could out of life and accustomed himself from early days to make everything yield to his needs and his pleasure. Having never had a house he never thought about

the sacrifices necessary for the protection of a family and the education of children. He ignored that simple and natural duty one sees daily in the bearing of crosses, pains, and illnesses of those dear to us. And so with the obligations that exist among citizens, among neighbours, these too remained foreign to our eternal Vagabond. He freed himself from all cares, outside his own person. Very early he acquired and always preserved the mentality of an old bachelor limited by his own narrow circle and his personal and present likings. His altruism disappeared in words or in inclinations.

He thought of himself, only and always of himself. His own self became his most precious possession, the most cherished and admired in the world. That which flattered it, for instance, a caress, was good, that which went against it, depreciated or hurt it, was bad. Thus egotism in Casanova's case became the touchstone of all judgment and action. This egotism was so real, so certain, so ingrained, that he forgot it and ended in a naïve cynicism. One finds a proof of this—among a hundred others—in the love passages of our Adventurer and Lucie.

As a young man growing up he lived in the country with some rich Venetians in their villa of Pasean. Lucie, the daughter of the concierge, paid him special attention. She was charming, but Casanova, still very shy, did not dare to pass beyond certain dalliances, free though they might be. The pretty girl put in the vein, probably wished for more. Be that as it may, after the departure of the young man she allowed herself to be enticed to an elopement with the first comer, in this case a wretch. Our hero's lament in this case is "that which made

me melancholy was to see in perspective that wretched girl in poverty and perhaps in disgrace, to detest my recollections and to hate myself as the first cause of her misfortune" (i. 122). So it was not the misfortune of Lucie which touched him nor her downfall, of which he had some years later a confirmation of his prophecy when he found her in a house of ill fame in Holland, it was only he was hurt by feeling himself talked about, and above all what vexed him was to have acted like a greenhorn in the matter. All the egotism and vanity of Casanova shows itself in those words.

Later he spared such regrets by showing more decision and fewer scruples. To gain his end all means were good. One sees what these were, they constituted the cooking preparatory to the satisfying of his appetite at the feast of life. They were justified in his eyes by the desired result, that is to say his own interests and his own perpetual satisfaction. He took his fortune where he found it. Happiness, riches, and gaiety were, in his opinion, better as enjoyed by him than anyone else. He resembled the writer who never gave back the books he borrowed on the ground that he read them with wisdom instead of letting them moulder in an unused library. Casanova built up his fortune and his pleasure at the expense of the fortune and pleasure of others. He found this quite natural.

He exploited his fellows with serenity, but his success was prepared by pleasantness and flattery. He realized the difficult fact of making the most despicable passions seem fairer by putting in force a true genius in his egotism. He made vice seem sympathetic, cynicism seem amiable, and shame a

bright bagatelle, with extraordinary art. Thus during almost the whole of his existence he provoked in others only some shrugging of shoulders, accompanied by some indulgent and perhaps sympathetic smiles, instead of wild rage and indignation. It was the most wonderful as well as the most paradoxical of his triumphs.

IV

HIS INDEPENDENCE

BY his nature, education, and even by the development of his personality, and still more, to satisfy his vanity and his egotism, Casanova was one of the most independent men in the world. He could not stand boredom, constraint, method, or law. He wished to feel as much at ease in his carriage or in his bed, except for the carrying out of his enterprises, or the realization of his dubious deeds. If any obstacle was in his path, he broke it down or got round it, but passed beyond. At every period, at fifteen and at seventy, he forced himself to assert or to proclaim this dashing independence. He showed it in his passions, his ideas, his habits, and in his actions. When, by luck, circumstances made him bow to them for a moment, he believed himself to be the most unhappy being, until he was able to free himself anew. He desired to have elbow room, and did all he could to procure it.

But his idea of liberty was rather unusual. He put on himself an unlimited value, an unlimited capacity. Thanks to this, all to himself was lawful. He carried his desires far, but without consideration of other people. It was for the joy of a complete emancipation that he devoted the greater part of his activity. It is unnecessary to say that he never

found it, not even in himself. He always gave the idea that he had it, and if he was not able to gain complete liberty, at least he obtained for himself the utmost liberty possible.

The entire organization of his life tended to independence. In early youth his parents allowed him to vegetate as he might, and his Grandmother Farusi admired him too much to impose discipline on him. His brothers and sisters tempted chance, each one from his or her own point of view, or provided for themselves without his assistance. He never allowed himself to marry, thinking that even the most indulgent wife would still be in his way. If later, during the demise of his wanderings, he met by chance any one of the natural children with which he stocked the world, he exclaimed, wondered, wept, gave a sum of money,* then went away and thought about them no more. He always carefully escaped every employment or profession which might have tied him down or attached him to something. To have a fixed residence was to him the same as having unseen fetters. His life was spent by chance in rooms in inns, in situations more or less comfortable and in receipt of hospitality good or splendid. Belonging to no special city, to no country, he gave but a slight and vagrant obedience to the laws and customs of the countries he passed through. "Happy justice which is bounded by a river or a mountain!" This celebrated sally of Pascal seems to have dictated his conduct to himself, and so he found himself in the best position to act as he liked and do what he pleased.

Liberty of adventures, renewed without ceasing,

* I don't think his *Mémoires* recount this often! (*Translator's note.*)

became indispensable to his way of life. It implied that he must be his own master so that he might at his own will find himself in Paris, in a week's time in Lyons, in another month in Rome to enjoy all pleasures or utilize the advantages of his situations. Nothing was able to come in the way of his indomitable independence. He deceived the watchfulness of mothers, tutors, husbands, lovers, cheated at play, denied his word or his signature, but he got to the end he wanted, which was to amuse himself without trammels and without moderation. Moreover, the object of his passion never dominated him except when he was gaining. Once satisfied, he detached himself with the knowledge of satisfaction gained, to search for something else, here or there, an excitement ever greater to vary his experiences. It was the same about women. Those whose conquest had necessitated long and patient siege from him, could not keep him long. "I have loved women madly, but I have always preferred to retain my liberty" (ii. 250).

He showed himself equally jealous of his liberty of thought. There was in him no original philosophy or simple logic. His ideas were in general advanced, but not rigid, and varied from time to time in his writings or conversations. If an idea pleased him, he seized it with delight. It was sufficient that it appeared to be emancipated from ancient dogma, or old metaphysics, and that it carried with it a distinction of being independent and different to them. In this way he dubbed himself "Philosopher," a term at the same time illuminating but vague. It allowed him to borrow in turn the deism of Voltaire and the atheism of Diderot, the criticism

of Bayle and the materialism of the Baron von Holbach. From the most opposite sources he composed a rich stock of philosophic terms a little unmatched and seeming like bric-à-brac. Like many of his contemporaries, he at once easily explained God, the soul, or the universe by an entity just as mysterious—Nature. When he found himself in a corner, he replaced reasoning by sophisms, and argument by witticisms. To a man “learned in the old way,” he said, “I replied that the system (of Copernicus) could not be that of God, since it was that of Nature, and that Holy Writ was not the place to which Christians ought to go for physical science” (ii. 119). In reality he was not much interested in pure speculation. He was too positive to bother much about metaphysics, and much preferred the fact to its causes. He thought he was a philosopher when he had built up some very specious theory, when he had pinned an adversary under the horns of a dilemma, in fine, when he had shone and believed himself to have shown the thoughts and intelligence of a free man.

If his metaphysics remained undecided, his ethics were full of precision. The conquest of happiness was the supreme end of his existence. Whoever did not agree with that axiom he regarded as foolish, if not worse. It was for every one to get as much happiness as he might or could, but this must not consist in vain dreams, nor impossible aims. We find it ready for us if we know to seize the right moment and profit by the right time. Happiness exists in pleasure and particularly through the senses. They alone do not deceive us. “I loved, I was loved, I felt well, I had plenty of money, I

was lavish with my pleasures, and I was happy" (v. 368). Such was the Casanovian conception of happiness. Life was good to him who knew how to use it; let us haste to profit by it; let us become sufficiently independent that we can enjoy ourselves, our own leisure. Death always comes too soon, and Death is the end of everything. The essential thing is to regard all things with an intelligent optimism. "It is quite certain that nobody is equally happy. Who can judge the happiness of his fellow creatures? It is a purely relative thing and depends as much on his nature as on the train of circumstances, that is to say, on luck. You cannot prove that virtue alone makes one happy. One may leave that belief, consoling and foolish as it is, to the convinced Pythagoreans, for it is the practice of virtue which requires self-conflict and causes grief, and grief and pleasure are mutually exclusive terms" (vi. 407). Away with vain formulæ! One practised virtue if it added to one's other pleasure; not otherwise. That was all. But it was enough to demonstrate that Casanova was the most convinced and active champion of individual independence, both in the theory and practice of ethics, and to say the truth, we had already seen quite enough to convince us on this point.

In Religion, Casanova affected a complete incredulity. If he sometimes owned to a mild toleration of it, it was by prudence or calculation. But he was too impetuous by nature and too self-satisfied to retain this attitude for long. He wished to shake off all beliefs because they constituted, in his way of thinking, sad limitations both to liberty of thought, and freedom of action. A rabid opponent of revealed

religion, he could not prevent himself proclaiming his conviction.

To him religion and fanaticism were one, a species of repulsive disease which every one had to guard against if he wished to preserve the dignity of a man. "You know, my dear reader, that nothing spreads so easily as the Plague, so can fanaticism, on whatever side it may be, be anything else but a disease of the mind?" (ii. 158). He thought himself too educated and learned to fall into such a vicious habit of mind. Infatuated by new doctrines, as much by the fact that they were in the air as by conviction, he thought he had found Truth by the force of his reason and through his critical faculty. He posed as a Free Thinker, ostensibly blamed the prejudices of the common herd, covered with sarcasms the poor creatures who did not possess his inward light, and rallied without discretion and without measure all that which excited the veneration of Believers. We find a bantering tone running through the *Mémoires*. It is not always without point, but it writes itself down too often to indulge in the most paltry pleasantries, in the most wild suspicions of no value whatever except to prove sometimes that the irreconcilable wit sometimes outshone his own intelligence.

Was this nonsense dictated by the mixed jealousy and admiration which the Adventurer had for Voltaire? Did he think that by imitating his freaks, he was also his equal in genius? It was regrettable, anyway. Casanova, an enlightened apostle of scientific rationalism then at its dawn, had sufficient intelligence and sufficient knowledge to speak with more authority and more seriousness.



LOUIS XV, KING OF FRANCE

From an engraving by J. Houbraken after J. C. Heilman

Without wishing to discuss the value of his doctrines, he had not the less taken a place in the advance-guard of his time in the midst of a body of chosen minds who began to discover for human thought an opening-view of freedom. Nevertheless, once more his vaingloriousness served him badly and led him into blunders.

He was also Independent in his political ideas. Again, he abominated dogmas and prejudices, relics of dead beliefs. Also he hated despotism, and the bitter politician who checked individual liberty and hindered recent aspirations. He was himself too well informed in social service not to hold up the imperfections of different political systems then in full vigour. The vicious monarchy which, by weakness, was coming to an end in France, by the egotism of a Louis XV, or the incapacity of a Louis XVI. The decadence of the Venetian Republic, directed by an aristocracy which had become unbelievers; the ruins of Spain congealed in a sterile intolerance; the foolish struggles of Prussian militarism; the terrible caprices of Russian autocracy. Governments, institutions, laws, not retained except by an imposing force or by the resignation of the subjects. He foresaw the downfall soon of those old institutions of Europe.

But, when present trouble came, what virtues replaced these vicious institutions? Casanova showed a very limited confidence in the intelligence, goodwill or the disinterestedness of man, especially when it is connected with affairs of State. History had shown itself to him in a long series of exactions, violence, and injustice unfolded through the long ages, and strong in this knowledge, he refused the new

epoch, the privilege of being able to bring to men peace and happiness. He knew that in times of distress and social unrest, it is very rare to find leaders who can discuss the direction to which they are tending, and who have the solid grip necessary to impose order. Nor was he ignorant, moreover, that the glory of one century frequently led to the wreck of the rest. He expected, however, the era of individual liberty where every one would be able to contribute something to the greatness and the prosperity of the State, according to his means and his talents. The important thing was to free the citizen from the ruler. All that was in the nature of tyranny seemed odious to Casanova. Yet he did not want to see the existing tyranny replaced by new vexations. Shut in the Castle of Dux, he followed with anguish the progress and the furies of the French Revolution carried through by some mad enthusiasts for the advantage of some who profited by it. He was almost broken-hearted by it, and during the last years of his life, he could think of no worse epithet, or more injurious and hurtful than the word "Jacobin."

Like the despotisms which oppressed, he hated the servilities which were degrading. What kind of people were those grandees whose chief honour consisted in holding the stirrup of a king, or to hand him his shirt? He saw with pity Louis XVI leaning on the shoulder of a d'Argenson, as on that of a valet; it hurt him to hear Marshal the Comte de Löwendal, conqueror of Bergen-op-Zoom, reply to the Queen of France in a diplomatic voice that the ragout with which she was pleased, was in reality *fricassée* of chicken. If the faculty of showing oneself

a humble courtier became the most beautiful attribute of power and glory, what must one think of those who degrade to such a point that power and glory? Casanova saw each class of Society at the feet of the class above it. Thus, from the lowest to the highest, all were in the same humiliating or lying position, whereas each one should be restored to his dignity and might be honoured according to his merits. So the thought of the Venetian tried to rejoin across the long period of time, the wisdom and harmony of the Republics of Antiquity. In waiting for this, he elbowed his way to gain for himself, in the midst of the troubles of the period in which he lived, honours, riches, and success.

At bottom, all the philosophical, moral, religious, and political ideas of Casanova appear superficial, oratorical, or, in a word, commonplace. Why did he prefer these ideas to the others? First, it was by conviction, on account of his very genuine independence of spirit. Secondly, through convenience, for they agreed perfectly well with his way of life. Lastly (and perhaps above all) to show off, as these opinions allowed him to mark himself off from the vulgar herd, even at the expense of some scandal, which was not displeasing to him. In any case, the attitude of Emancipation once adopted, was claimed by him at all times, and as often as possible, his liberty of conscience, thought, and action was declared by him.

This was not done without some danger, and therefore not without some merit. Even if his wild actions had given an excuse for the police or the law to interfere with him, this was an inconvenience

he must have foreseen and risked for his career, but his intellectual and moral unrestrainedness offended the greatest interests, and were too shocking to the great ones of the world not to threaten the heaviest penalties. He struck without ceasing at the prerogatives and tradition of the Church. Although Malesherbes had made the Encyclopedia popular in spite of the veto on it, and although Voltaire had been able to combat against ecclesiastical despotism all his life, still Malesherbes was Malesherbes, and Voltaire was Voltaire, whereas Casanova was nobody but Casanova, a poor devil, whom one could easily suppress at will if he became too tiresome, without alarming public opinion in the least. In the century when every one seemed to be able to mock at the old principles and established governments, some paid dear for their imprudence. To speak but of France. It was in 1749 that Danry, self-styled Chevalier de Latude, was put in the Bastille for a malicious joke against Madame de Pompadour. It was in 1762 that Calas was broken on the wheel while alive for being an inconvertible Calvinist. It was in 1766 that La Barre, scarcely more than a child, was beheaded and burned for some silly irreligious boastings. Casanova must have known these tragic stories, and many others. Nevertheless, the most active period of his life, when he manifested with zealous unction himself as philosopher, Freemason, magician, atheist and libertine, was that period contemporary with the imprisonment of Latude and the punishment of La Barre.

He was always undisciplined and in perpetual revolt. He took an opposite view to every law and

principle, and protested equally against the examination by a Customs official and the authority of the Pope. He lost no chance for an irreverence or for an insult. He cultivated anarchy and rebellion, sought his friends in the wildest sets, exasperated by his fierce rhapsodies the men whom he considered fanatics or conservatives, who had a tenacious memory and a fixed opinion. He knew this, and dared them, employing his talents to escape from their vengeance. Yet he had not escaped being thrown into the prison of the Piombi for "Public contempt of the Holy Religion," and one could not prevent him thinking of what he knew of the prisons of Madrid and Barcelona, which had its origin much less for what is told romantically in the *Mémoires* than from his reputation as a man both impious and dangerous.

Everything that limited his darling liberty at once provoked in him an immediate action of defiance. Ceaselessly he held himself on his guard and remained defiant to the world, both in misfortune and successes. But in his case this defiance increased his fear of being burned alive. He accepted no contradiction, no remonstrance. A gesture, a look, a smile, the whisper of two people who spoke low, all to him seemed doubtful, suspicious, and took in his eyes a danger menacing him. This fear never left him. If he believed a little, he suspected more encroachment on his independence, and his first impulse was to fall on the intruder. Disdainful, grandiloquent, indignant, he stormed, declaimed, lashed himself to a fury, invoked Reason, Law, and Justice in circumstances with which they had nothing to do, calling for the Commandant of the town, the Governor of

the Province, the minister or the prince. Putting forward his influence swiftly, his friends, his protectors, and so sometimes by his arrogance and audacity succeeding in intimidating the half-hearted or the weak. But if he strove against the inflexibility of an order, the inviolability of an edict, or at tyranny or force, in fact, against all which limited or hurt him, then he broke into frightful rages and almost apoplectic furies. His pride in himself was mingled therein. The persons who touched his liberty of enjoyment, of publicity, those who would not bow to his wishes or his caprices, these were the wretched ones. And if he was in the wrong, especially if he were wrong, he wished them the worst misfortunes from the bottom of his heart. He rejoiced to recount the disasters and the tortures which he wished them to have. "I burned with the desire for vengeance. . . . I saw myself at the head of a people ready to exterminate the government by which I was oppressed. I massacred the aristocrats without pity. All ought to bite the dust. I was in the fever of delirium. I knew the causes of my misfortune, and my imagination destroyed it at the root. . . ." (iii. 49). The slightest check, the most ordinary constraint in his eyes assumed the proportions of terrible humiliations and unfettered his rage. Although some forty years had passed since his first humiliation in love, he still felt strongly the outrage in thinking of the young fellow who had cut him out with the pretty little Bettine, and he wrote: "Deceived, humiliated, badly treated, having become an object of the contempt of young Cordiani, happy and triumphant, I spent three hours in thinking out the blackest projects of vengeance. To

poison both of them appeared a very diminutive trifle at that terrible and unhappy moment " (i. 44).

His rages became so violent that they upset his nervous system so much that they did him physical harm. " At the same time I felt my hair quiver, and I had an aching pain in the soles of my feet " (vi. 44). For a wild spirit like this, revenge seemed a real benefit, and an incomparable compensation. " Be it right, be it wrong, revenge never left my heart until it was satisfied " (v. 122). He was not always in such a happy position of being always able to accomplish it, but he continued to bear terrible ill will. It was in retaining these dislikes, and caressing them to his last day, that this lover of Independence gained for himself among the ruins of his liberty itself, his last and his most bitter enjoyments.

Vanity, egotism, and independence. In these you see the necessary expressions of Casanova's personality. If the Adventurer amuses us, or too often makes our flesh creep by his tempestuous vanity, if he makes us hate him by his egotism, he also makes us admire him for his perpetual desire for liberty, and by the pluck with which he showed it and defended it. This passion for independence impregnated his personality, and gave it a special stamp and a glory. Doubtless, he utilized it often for the accomplishment of doubtful actions, but he dissimulated his vices and misdeeds under that noble disguise, so haughty and dignified, which was peculiar to himself. It gave him distinction.

The other adventurers of his time, although numerous and versatile, were more cautious, more

constrained. In spite of their efforts, they knew debauched life and its low esteem. Or else, if they were sufficiently strong-minded in their evil line, and had, so to say, more bottom in it, they exhibited themselves as more grave, more nervous, and more brutal. No one was able to equal Casanova, because no one was able to attain to such a high degree of graceful carriage, not only in his thoughts, but in his acts. It was the secret of his charm and of his attraction.

V

THE REAL CASANOVA

“This is I, and I cannot be otherwise.”—LUTHER at the Diet of Worms.

MANY wise men have said, “I feel two men within me,” a very happy way of expressing the contrast between the incessant conflict between the instincts of a person, and the religious and social laws which are intended to restrain them. It is a shortened likeness, a way of personifying the eternal struggle between good and evil, between body and soul, spirit and flesh. Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (vii. 19), says, “For the good that I would that I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do.”

This allotment of values places the victory of the failure of the will to make good on the basis of a fixed moral philosophy, reduces all individual manifestation to a series of definite actions, and allows one to class those who act accordingly either among the good or among the bad.

It is not the same from the psychological standpoint; a dualism of so narrow a nature could not be brought into line with the many elements which our very complex personality always contains. This point of view allows, in short, not only a lot of widespread mental positions very different to each other, but it also allows the co-existence of psychological

states also mutually distinct. They may vary from one minute to another according to the special affinity of the subject, the originality of his real deeds, the degree that he was swayed by others, or the extent of his fixed qualities. It is equally influenced by the places he dwelt in, the deeds he did, the atmosphere he breathed, and the age he lived in. It spread its roots vigorously into the sub-conscious self of the individual and the obscure domain of his ancestry. His actions, following each other, though composed at the same time of many elements which flowed and ebbed, eddied, and yet continually balanced, made and created that creature always moving and that whole always changing, which was called by the name of psychologic-physiognomy. Only virtue or a frightful vice could have fashioned that physiognomy to give him, as a whole, a definite stamp, such as one sees sometimes, though rarely. Every person possesses, in some way, many personalities which infringe on each other. This was particularly noticeable in the case of Casanova. It was not sufficient, after having studied his good qualities and the reverse, to put them down in two separate columns, to ask him which were good or which were evil. We have nothing to do with this. He didn't care; we have neither the means nor, perhaps, the right to decide. One can only use the materials collected up to this time, make them harmonious, and so place them before us to give us the key to that strange personality.

For, in the different stages of his life, as in the analysis of his psychological nature, Casanova appears to us in very different and contradictory aspects, directing events yet being formed by them. Full of

vigour and ardour, yet abounding in strange weaknesses. Gifted with great qualities which he used rightly or wrongly, and which led him to his worst faults and sudden viciousness which combated with unexpected virtues. To judge separately his principles and aptitudes or exhibit the most striking things about his character, is a work, necessary no doubt, but a little artificial, especially as Casanova was a mixture always mysterious of strange elements full of confusion where two distinct currents may be traced at the same time. The analysis was against itself. Now that he has appeared in some scattered way before us the contradictions in him seem more distinct and more disintegrating. We must clear up this disorder, collect his scattered characteristics and restore them each to his place, in a word, reconstruct the very brilliant figure which will then show us some of his motive-power and himself give to us his real meaning.

Casanova seems to have been a man of infinite charm, who gained at first sight but lost when known better.

At the first meeting he captivated. Good-looking, gay, witty, very affable, putting himself at everybody's disposal, and being good-natured, he pleased every one from the great lady of the Minister to the adventuress and the thief. He drew to himself immediate sympathy by his liveliness, his charm, his commerce in the world and his smiling knowledge of it. His indisputable natural qualities placed him beyond the ordinary person, and the common herd admitted his superiority which was so far above it. Every one, therefore, who had just got to know him loved him. He drew attention to himself,

showed kindness, evoked around himself an atmosphere of good fellowship from which, however, he gained some real profit. It needed misfortune or some unexpected event to bring to light that his charming being had hidden within some imperfections.

His great qualities were real and indisputable, but he did not develop or cultivate, limit or check them. The thoughtful life was to him unknown. He knew nothing of the intellectual or moral discipline which could strengthen the mind and the heart and which could be the source of real merit. He never of his own accord showed that strength of mind which is not always amiable but which is virile. With him all remained on the surface. He was both a *dilettante* and irresponsible. Without any sequence of ideas, without any rule of how he should live. He went as he pleased as circumstances directed, and pleased himself by what whim occurred at the time. Greatly favoured, in the midst of the extraordinary indulgence of his century, by the most happy talents and a surprising genius, he might have come to future honours, power, in fact, to his true place, and kept there. His lightness cost him this position. Always living for his own desires, gave him a Bohemian turn, as a man about town, and a frivolous reveller.

His fascination was like that of the fine portraits one has to look at from some distance. Thanks to the figure, the outline, the shades, the contours of his perspective, a being evolves and becomes alive to the view. Come near; the lines make one confused, the colours become dull. Touch it; the surface is flat. Turn the picture, and one finds a

canvas stretched on a framework. Casanova lost when he was looked at too near. He has given his best at the first impression. If one scratches the brilliant paint, one finds the dull canvas underneath contains, between its meshes, little or nothing.

He had neglected perfecting his most marked qualities, so they soon degenerated into mediocrity. This man, who made friends so easily, who was in such varied coteries, knowing all kinds of men, who had been in alliance with so many companions in his pleasures or misfortunes, had he any real friends? One was uncertain about Casanova, because he had such a magnetic influence, such wit, and was so original, but though one knew him to be a delightful companion, one had always when with him to be a little on one's guard more or less. He lost no opportunity to be agreeable, obliging, and even generous. But to whom did he ever open his heart? To whom did he ever speak freely and without self-interest? To whom did he ever become devoted without an after thought? He never knew true friendship. His conquests of women, innumerable as his gallant adventures were, were almost all sensual. Sometimes vague aspirations seem to have raised him above simple desire, but in such a case, he showed vanity, imagination, much literary influence, and too little of passion. So fast as he lost friendship he lost true love.

If one followed his ways and modes of thinking step by step, one would see how his intentions, easy, artificial and superficial, came to substitute themselves for his real and profound motives. Again, how he replaced friendship by boon-companionship, love by sensuality, nay more, now he shows himself

malign rather than clever, pedantic rather than learned, boasting rather than brave, and impulsive rather than reasoned, headstrong rather than spontaneous. He was capricious, scene-creating, and never getting to the bedrock of things; he showed true wildness. His wildness, like his likes, were always excessive, but passed swiftly, leading to uncertainty of desire and uncertainty of mind. We have seen with what care he avoided those who were his superiors to triumph over his inferiors, fools or simpletons. Thus, it seems his apparent superiority is but a disguised mediocrity. He had none of that mental nobleness which comes out at all times and shines in a catastrophe. If, from time to time, he showed real sentiments of delicacy, if he displayed his generosity or kindness, these moments were of very short duration, as they became very soon subordinated to his interest or his egotism, which spoiled everything. Incapable of obeying rule or any constraint, he tried everything and achieved nothing. His activity became but meaningless agitation. Having every kind of power in himself, Casanova fell into all kinds of weakness. He remained a mediocrity, mediocre in his ideas, his thoughts, his actions, mediocre in the whole course of his existence, in which, however, from a distance, he shone with so much brightness. He was a perpetual failure. It is difficult to explain this undeniable position of the Adventurer. The fame and the originality of his surroundings, were due to his manner of disguising under a rich dress his real poverty. It was his fine feathers and gold cloth, which covered so many of his imperfections and his misdeeds. His outward appearance, exterior decora-

tions, quick change, struck many people. His combats with authority made him an unusual person. One sympathizes always with one who flouts authority, beats the watch, even if he is the worst person in the world, if only he knows how to be delightful !

Casanova interests us in the same way by his cleverness, the diversity of ways in which he made his wits serve his appetites. We now find that he was nothing, that he was worth nothing, but that he was a real master in using spontaneously his intelligence, imagination, and action. He captivated by his cleverness, his changes, and also by his impudence. It was a continual and amusing problem to know how far his adventures would go, what new trick he would play, or by what subterfuge he might escape. His whole life took on the appearance of a decoration well put together. Seen from the front it showed a figure which shone by being well put together and brilliantly coloured ; seen from the back, it was stranger to the view, clad in rags and tatters.

Casanova arrived at the paradoxical result of being able to create a fascinating personality on a mean and evil foundation. Venice, his native city, appears to be borne upon the sea, and to float upon the waters of the lagoons, but in reality it is connected with about a hundred and twenty little islands by an innumerable number of piles driven into mud, which unite it and keep it together in spite of the water and the waves. The personality of Casanova, fascinating externally, had the same uncertain and dubious foundation.

To clear up this paradox and explain these contradictions, why should we not leave the particular for the general, in comparing him with his countrymen? Why should we not trace in his complex character inherited, rather than his personal traits? We do it not to discover an exhaustive explanation of his nature, but to see what were the life-springs of his own psychology.

Frivolous elegance, a ceaseless desire of shining, an appetite for pleasures which sought quantity rather than quality. With superficial refinement, a taste for luxury which accommodated itself to imitations, ease of expression which degenerated into loquacity, easy wit, interested kindness, spontaneity in good wishes which did not last, ease in comprehension without depth. The will rather to plan than to do, too quick imagination, liveliness almost fantastic, slippery in action, graceful in his ways, do not these characteristics, which were his, represent in a great part the mentality of the Southern peoples on the Mediterranean?

Without a doubt, each of these peoples owns its own genius. One and all, however, for many centuries, have had constant dealings with each other, by proximity, interest, commerce, religion, wars or alliances, goings or comings, that apart from the national character, they have evolved an international character, a synthetic character which is easily distinguished. It brings together the Neapolitan and the inhabitant of Tunis, the Provençal and the Greek, the Venetian and the Levantine, the Arab and the Spaniard. It makes them, if not brothers, at least cousins. All those races have, more or less, crossed in blood, all have breathed the

same air and basked in the same sun. All have lived an easy life on the littoral of the same beautiful sea, the cradle of our civilization. They have behind them the past glory, the riches and splendour of Athens, of Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, Byzantium, and Fez. For innumerable generations they gave to the world philosophy, art, and laws, and were themselves the depositaries of a certain form of truth, of beauty, and of happiness. That they degenerated was the true result of the law of evolution. But they still had, from their ancestors and from the magnificent civilizations in the midst of which they themselves lived, the qualities developed in the course of ages, once acquired, but now ingrained. Each one owned to a different extent a little Greek clearness, weight from the Latins, Phœnician subtlety, Jewish caution, Egyptian mystery, Mohammedan wisdom, Spanish dignity, and Italian grace. Even in their decline these races preserved their native distinction, and the aristocratic grace of the old races, but they knew also their vices and the corruptions and degradation of a declining civilization.

One among them, more clever, more active, better endowed than his fellows, added to his inherited character a vast knowledge of his world, of his own time, and used it to push his own desires, to make a show and indulge his passion for play. We have here our hero, distinguished yet undisciplined, too changeable to be balanced, too passionate to be wise, too clever to be reasonable, that mixture of good and bad, that tissue of contradictions, that individual in whose character every quality jostled, every vice, every aspiration, every failure. That

man, whose finest intelligence was put to the most unworthy ends, and with whom the nastiest things were veiled under the most beautiful of veils, the many-sided, unique Casanova.

From the fact that he was always changing, that he in himself contained every opposite and mixed quality, that he showed himself by turns sympathetic and hateful, clever yet trivial, reasonable or foolish ; generous with his dubious gains, feeling, though a perfect egotist, delicate even in his doubtful acts, punctilious in his dishonesty. From the fact that one can find in him all the virtues and all the vices, according to the point of view from which one considers him, Casanova has evoked the wildest admiration and the most cutting criticism. In his own time, even when he was there, he excited passionate admiration and much hostility. He was treated either as a cheat or a rascal, or else as a wonderful man with a superior mind. Without doubt, those whom he had deceived, cheated, downed, or laughed at, tried to get a bit of their own back. But to have secured for a considerable period the consideration of persons like Baffo, Bragadin, Bernis, Comte de Lamberg, Comte de Waldstein, Opitz, and the Prince de Ligne, to mention only a few, shows that he had great merit. Perhaps these personages were not always meritorious in themselves, but still, no matter who they were, their appreciation of him was a considerable value.

Ought we also to invoke women as witnesses ? Manon Balletti would be one, and Francesca Buschini, whose passionate letters of admiration have come down to us. There was also that of the mysterious



VENICE IN THE XVIII CENTURY
"LE LEVER DE LA MONDAINE"

By Pietro Longhi

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Henriette, who wrote to him, it seems, after fifteen years of separation, "To the most loyal of men," or Elisa von der Recke, whose attention sweetened his last days.

After Casanova's death, when the different editions of the *Mémoires* began to appear, opinions were very much divided about the clever Venetian, just as in life he was praised sympathetically or blamed as a shocking fellow. Sainte-Beuve could not restrain himself from a certain indulgence for this great master of Love, who never permitted women to dominate him. Jules Janin held that he was a simple braggart, animated by gross appetites. P. Lacroix, bowled over but defiant, accounts his stories apocryphal, and believes them to be a poor literary joke of Stendhal; Fr. Masson, who wrote on Bernis, only sees lies in them, and throws them aside with disdain. But in proportion to the intelligent and fruitful research that is given to them, the value and authenticity of the *Mémoires* and the personality of the author, stand out with an arresting attention. Certain lovers of Casanova admit the infinite charm of their hero, and find excuses for his very worst deeds. Others are delighted, perhaps, by the chance, blaming him in the name of Morality. Yet M. Octave Uzanne pleads,* "Why should one blame this Petronius of the time of Louis XV for having shown us and displayed to us the morals of his very decadent century, a morality which the highest personages whom he wrote about practised? . . . Have we the right to criticize by a too severe analysis the pleasure he has given us on reading the *Mémoires*, and to sermonize on the shocking habits

* *Revue du XVIII^e Siècle*, livraison de Juillet-December 1917.

of individuals ? It is not pleasing to see the severity both pedantic and superior with which certain learned persons have commented on his *Mémoires*, and how they have spoken of his follies, his vagabondage and his evil deeds. They held themselves like bourgeois professors, tamed, believing much and showing themselves always in a distant manner, as if they did not wish to compromise themselves in the society in which Casanova moved, throwing dust in the eyes of their readers by always styling our Venetian by a contemptuous expression. This 'oddity,' this 'scamp,' this 'cheat,' and other epithets reserved for the worst sinners put on the index of a certain class, and stoned by them. It is a little sad to have to notice these pretences and mental restrictions to which they are self-condemned, so one judged independently. . . . Our Giacomo was neither better nor worse than the most illustrious personages who appeared on the world's stage of the eighteenth century."

Thus Casanova does not cease provoking discussions. As a man always himself in extremes, it seems even now he must be loved or hated, praised or blamed.

But what is the use ? Why accuse or excuse ? Why exalt his qualities to the extent of hiding his errors, or amplify his errors so as to hide his virtues ? Why refuse to see in his nature that it had in it a perpetual contradiction and an unceasing diversity ? Why fall a victim to that mania of always classing, judging or placing into a fixed attitude one of the most complex, disconcerting, most protean of human beings ? Why should one wish that a career of seventy-three years spent in the most careless

century in history ought to have been directed by exactness or by logic ? Why expect to meet, except in novels, a character always uniform ? Who has seen a man perfect in fortune and misfortune ? What saint has not sometimes shown poor, and what criminal all evil, qualities ? Casanova was simply a man, and this was the reason for his contradictory sides. He seems alternately good or bad, according to the trend of his circumstances. He interests us by this mixture, the proportions and the shares of these qualities and defects. He lived. That was all.

It appears that the lapse of time from then to now encourages us to take sides for or against the Adventurer. Let us accept him as he was, without wild enthusiasm, and without recriminations. In himself there were the eternal passions which there will always be in humanity. They determined the fluctuations of his existence. It is essential to allow him to please us, showing himself to us without circumlocution, or false modesty. We must allow him to show himself to us in the expressions peculiar to his time, all characteristically scented from the dead past. In his thoughts and in his actions, Casanova showed the same carelessness, the same lightness, the same cynicism as most of his contemporaries. He used and abused the prejudices and customs of his time. Like so many others, he utilized for his own ends "That kind of practical philosophy which, making egotism a system, regarded Society as a struggle in craft, success as the rule over the just and unjust, virtue as a matter of taste, and happiness and the world as the patrimony of clever sharpers" * A very modest philosophy !

* Maximilien Robespierre, *Discours à la Convention le 18 floréal, an II.*

Casanova did not invent it, but he adopted it with zeal. He is the most representative person of his libertine class in the eighteenth century. Must we show his smiles or smirks always as if reflected in a mirror? Assuredly not, although it is sometimes interesting to look at them there.

THE TWO GREAT ASPECTS OF CASANOVA

I

CASANOVA AS A LOVER

AT first sight one thinks that Casanova wrote his *Mémoires* only to recount in them a long series of passionate love affairs. Really, they occupy less than three-quarters of the work and fizzle out only when the love-making of the Venetian was ended. But we see in this way that women occupied three-quarters of his life. All led to them; he was taught in youth the influence of the doubtful society into which he was constantly thrown, the curious morality of his time, the licentious atmosphere of Venice and the gay life of Paris; nay more, his temperament itself, and his perpetual appetite for pleasure. To follow the joyous Adventurer in his love affairs is to see him as spontaneous as he can be, and to see the characteristics of his personality, illustrating at the same time his psychology in some brave deeds.

“Zelmis, as you know, Mesdames, is a cavalier who always pleases. It is enough to see him, to notice him, and his looks are so happy, that one does not need to seek long to find him amicable. His only difficulty is to keep himself from being too much loved.” *

* Regnard, *La Provençale*.

And he did "please," an essential quality in that careless century, when every one met or dispersed in a perpetual whirlpool. One had no time, as in former ages, to write treatises or make discourses on love, and go gently to its conclusion step by step, or to engage, as in later times, in declarations so much directed towards futurity that one could always find the time to finish them. It was a time of fantasy. A caprice was no sooner born than it was realized. What did it matter to a woman to be in love with a man to-day or to-morrow? He pleased her, and would continue to do so for some hours, some days, weeks or, perhaps, even months!

Casanova, as we know, was admirably adapted for making at first sight an excellent impression. At each stage of his career he captivated women by an especial charm of his own which varied with his time of life. There was in turn the freshness of the beardless boy, the manly grace of the soldier, the easy carriage of the man-about-town, the prestige of the traveller, the originality of the man of thought. His life was one of perpetual love-making. He drew the attention of women by his good looks, his swagger, his elegance, his refined dress and veiled vigour. He enthralled them by the warmth of his declarations, his rightly-timed attack, the audacity of his proceedings and the suddenness of his victory. Women loved him because he knew how to speak to their ideas, to understand and cherish them, and to satisfy them in whatever they wished from the ephemeral caprice to a love affair of the deepest kind. They fought for him because he was in the limelight of fashion and his fame as a successful lover excited their admiration or their wickedness.

In short, they adored him, perhaps because, and this shall be our last reason, in spite of all his attention to their little whims and small follies, he remained always their Master, superior to love in the midst of a great passion, and so, if he made love ceaselessly, he remained always master of the situation.

Everything in him was ready to make him a success. A long list of love affairs covers the pages of the *Mémoires*, and moreover, though it is surprising, there one learns that this impetuous self-glorifier and boaster has sometimes shown discretion and suppressed more than one of his victims. The latter belonged to every class, all ages, ranks, societies, and countries, adventuresses, girls of good society, his linen-maid, his cook, many of the so-called gay life, the wife of his captain. There was Nina Bergonzi, the mistress of the Viceroy of Catalonia; Justinienne Wynne, afterwards Comtesse de Rosenberg; the seamstresses of Casopo, the Parisian *midinettes*, the workers in Turin, the five Hanoverian sisters in London, the three Geneva friends, the poor serf Zaire of St. Petersburg, the marvellous M.M., the celebrated Silvia, Mme. d'Urfé so mad, Mme. Dubois so wise, Nanette and Marton, Tonine and Barberine, Thérèse, Mlle. Vesian, Esther, Rosalie, Lia, the servant of the priest of Orsova, the wife of the Burgomaster of Cologne, Francesca Buschini, the consoler of his evil days, that strange Caton who loved him at sixty, and so many—so many others.

All these we know, how many do we not know who loved him either wholly, or in some lesser way? He did not only inspire caprices, he was also an object of real passion, for instance, in the cases of Henriette

and of Dona Lucrezia, and of pure affection in that of Manon Balletti. Every kind of feminine sympathy was known to him ; he received all and responded to each with similar ardour. “ In my long career as a lover, during which my irresistible passion for women made me use every kind of means to make them love me, I turned the heads of hundreds of women whose charms had overpowered my reason ” (v. 175).

Here we see the reciprocity. If he pleased women, they delighted him infinitely.

They were for him a perfect and delicate subject, and were necessarily pleasing and delightful to his virile nature, the necessary corollary to his happiness. He could no more do without them than without food. They were the dispensers of pleasure, always agreeable, and certainly, to speak plainly, he regarded them as a necessity. “ To cultivate the enjoyment of the senses was always my principal affair. I have never known one of more importance.” But this sensuality, as one of his great objects of life, occupied in his eyes a meaning of high importance, ruled him with a pleasant tyranny, delightful illusions, and excited a multitude of exquisite emotions. “ Love excites a magnetism of which brutes are by no means ignorant, but I regard those who are not sensual as wanting something in their nature ” (v. 389). Casanova was sensual to excess. The least things in his liaisons gave him incomparable pleasure. “ When a woman is pretty, one has but a moment to find her so ” (iv. 494). Then, what a long series of delights, subtle and delicate, were recounted in his description of the beings he loved ! There is a long catalogue, from which it is only necessary to cull, fine eyes,

beautiful teeth, lovely complexions, divine air . . . and all enhanced by the coiffure, the fashionable dress or the delightful undress. These increased his quick senses, for he was one who could see female loveliness irrespective of or increased by the beautiful attire of the lady by whom he was captivated. Everything about her was dear to him. "I have always," he writes, "loved the scent of her whom I adored" (Preface, x). Her most intimate belongings became to him charming. "There is something in the bedchamber of the woman one loves, that one adores; something so near, the engaging scents, the voluptuous dreams. Thus, if a lover were offered a choice between it and Heaven, it is not the latter he would choose" (iii. 505).

All the same, he wished something real. His hands were ready to caress his beloved one. No one was better at putting a curl right, tying a ribbon, toying with a corset lace, or even to try on the silk stockings he had bought as a present, or to adjust the gift of his superb garters decorated with pleasant mottoes.

These little things enchanted him. Knowing the art of love from the beginning to the end, he appreciated all its delights, all its colour and beauty, as gourmets do that of the taste and the look of a wine. He knew the passionate attack, and the avow of the lady who, "whispering she'd ne'er consent, consented."

*La jouissance et les désirs
Sont ce que l'homme a de plus rare ;
Mais ce ne sont pas vrais plaisirs
Dès le moment qu'on les sépare.*

Casanova became wild in pursuit. He was like a man in high fever. In his "lover's passion"

nothing kept him back. He was never tired. He simply began again.

His imagination had its part also, and, naturally, he went beyond every limit. Listen to what his muse says in very bad but suggestive verse :—

Quand tu me vois, Caton, te peindre mon amour,
Te le prouver par de tendres caresses,
Ressentir du plaisir les plus vives détresses
Brûler, frissonner tour à tour,
Tu serrer dans mes bras, t'arroser de mes larmes,
Donner mille baisers à chacun de tes charmes,
Vouloir en même temps toucher tous tes appas,
Être jaloux de ceux dont je ne jouis pas. . . .,
Quitter encore ceux-là pour ceux que j'ai quittés,
Posséder tout et vouloir davantage,
Enfin, anéanti par tant de voluptés,
Ne plus trouver d'autre langage
Pour t'exprimer tout l'excès de mes feux,
Que des soupirs tumultueux :
Alors tu crois, Caton, lire au fond de mon âme,
Tu crois y découvrir tout l'amour qui m'enflamme.
Eh bien ! détrompes-toi, ces désirs, ces baisers,
Ces transports, ces soupirs, ces pleurs ne sont encore
Du feu qui dévore
Que des indices bien légers.*

It is obvious that in spite of these frenzied words, he sought, before everything, his own enjoyment, and especially when he was able to make his love happy as well. His victories gave him the greatest satisfaction, and his combination of sensuality and self-esteem ended by astonishing himself. The *Mémoires* abound in copious panegyrics of his special amatory merits. They seem to have some exaggeration in them, but all the same, no one need doubt that their reality gave him enough satisfaction.

Among all his feminine beauties, what was his favourite type? It is very difficult to decide when he alleges that a man of spirit ought to be able to love

* Verses found amongst the papers at Dux.

every type, however different. The latest was always incomparable when the adventure began. But he was not always difficult to conquer, when the other sex was resolved, and he had no love affair on hand.

He loathed dullness, sluggishness, and anything like that in the minds of those he loved. One time, waiting for horses, he met on the road to Rome, a singer of renown, who had interested him. Casanova had loved many actresses, this one was pretty, amiable; however, he despised her:—

“Although young and pretty, she did not awaken any desire in me. She was too fair and too fat. But, on the other hand, with her maid, a lovely brunette, who had a beautiful figure and flashing eyes, I fell in love on the spot” (v. 9). And it was to the latter that he transferred his affections.

He disliked just as much women who were restrained by stupidity or prudery, or those who were affected. “The worst kind of woman is the dull one, the learned one comes next” (vi. 116). He also was afraid of too great tenderness which was attended with jealousy. Poor Manon Balletti—that unlettered Mlle. de Lespinasse—was discarded for showing a too troublesome passion for the Inconstant Adventurer.

What he wanted was gaiety, brilliance, and spontaneity. Naïveté without disguise, or cynicism without a veil. The girl Greuze painted attracted him no more than the simple model of Chardin. What he preferred was the brilliance of face, form, and amusement of the ladies painted by Fragonard, so delightfully charming, playful, and perhaps a thought malicious. They possessed that charm which made them both attracted to life and desirable

to love. He also admired a young beauty just in her early zenith, full of the joy of life. Thus Lia. "She was dazzling. She was not more than twenty-two. Slight, with the figure of a nymph, beautiful hair of the blackest tint, with a complexion of lilies and roses, beautiful eyes, full of spirit and fire, fringed with long lashes, and with eyebrows so arched, that they looked as if they wished to declare war on all those who admired her beauty. All in her showed education, and a perfect knowledge of the world" (v. 38). True beauty for him had to be united with natural good breeding and refinement. "She had, moreover," said he of Charlotte Lamotte, "that which does not always go with beauty, but which, in my opinion, is worth more. I mean much distinction in her manners, in her air, in her look, and in the sound of her voice" (vi. 199).

But so many good qualities were not always enough for his nice taste. He wished the chosen lady to have wit, conversation, and to know good manners. It is certain he did not escape mediocrity in some of his amours, and stupid and debauched women encumbered his career of gallantry. His desire and his imagination gave them an illusory prestige until the day, more or less distant, when their real character was revealed to him in his existence of poverty and distress.

But he fascinated some women of incontestable superiority. Esther, whose cleverness fascinated him in Holland; the young Italian Countess Clementine, eager for reading; Mme. Dubois, whose powers of reason were great, and who followed Locke; Hedvige (Swiss), deep in theology; and, far above all, the beautiful nun of Murano, the incomparable

M.M. In the long list of Casanova's amours it is she who takes the first place. She possessed the beauty of Lia, the charm of Esther, the intellectual graces of Clementine, the logic of Mme. Dubois, and the arguments of Hedvige. Better still, she was the most content, the most audacious, and the most enigmatic of all women.

What can one make of her passion and romance ? Even admitting that the story of it is not imagined entirely, no one can doubt that imagination and invention had not a little part in it. Still, imagined or lived, the story is living with the true perfection of the feminine Idol of Venice.

Beautiful, sensual, firm of will, and with inborn power, such was the character of M.M. Tall, slight, with gorgeous brown hair, fine complexion, delicate skin, blue eyes, fine lips and brilliant teeth, a beautiful hand, a perfect neck, and a firm look, to which she joined much distinction of manner, a natural elegance and the ease of the well-born. Besides, she was intelligent, and had sufficient education to pursue it to serious ends, in wit or better. Strong, and adoring adventure, pleasure was her end, her law, her religion. She early in youth knew passion to its limit ; all that youth can know. Having nothing then to learn, she wished to experience everything, so she surrounded herself with pleasure and embarked either for Cythère or for Lesbos. But always mistress of herself, she preserved in her most abandoned love affairs an incontestable dignity. She was a figure, strange and passionate. To satisfy her perpetual need of enjoyment, she employed every means and every subterfuge, and to justify it every sophism and paradox. The obstacles and dangers increased

her passions and rendered her pleasures more intense. She lived a wonderful double life of restraint and licence. She was clothed in her nun's dress during the day, to appear wonderfully dressed at night in splendid ball dresses with lovely jewels, in which she went (masked) from the theatre to the gaming tables, or else arriving at her rendezvous behind the statue of Colleone in the striking costume of a cavalier. In every part she showed the authority of a great lady and used it, but with the resource of the frank adventuress.

Nothing could please the taste of Casanova better, and none of his conquests gave him as much satisfaction as this one. Her beauty and wit were to his taste, as was also the danger involved in their meeting and situation. He loved the little casino filled with curious pictures, the gay books and all the luxury of love which belonged to the invisible but powerful and great man whose strange taste protected their love affair. Never was a young couple so perfectly matched. Both possessed the same kind of beauty, the same love and knowledge of pleasure and happiness. The same absence of scruples, and the same genius for intrigue. But M.M. was even the more intelligent, the more subtle, and the more direct of purpose of the two.

Yes, M.M. was the woman best suited to the taste and temperament of Casanova. She satisfied and flattered him. His Venetian love affairs when he was about thirty appear to have been his zenith in that line. When he was the perfect lover and acted as such, he was pleased and pleased.

A l'âge où l'on est aimable
Rien n'est si beau que d'aimer.*

* Molière, *La Princesse d'Elide*, Prologue, Scene 1



Photo. Alinari

L'EMBARQUEMENT POUR CYTHÈRE

From the original picture in the Louvre by Antoine Watteau

For a man of such passions and so pursued, it was difficult to steer his way among women. What were his tactics and in what was his secret as the perfect lover?

Writers have often represented Casanova as a braggart who conquers by violence, without regard for the future, always ready to conquer a woman of any rank. This was the opinion of certain contemporaries, and a few pages of the *Mémoires* seem to confirm it.

One day, going by land from Padua to Venice, he passed a chariot going at a great pace, which overturned. A young lady was thrown to the ground in beautiful disorder, and Casanova saw that her charms were greatly to his mind. He gallantly helped to put the lady on her feet, dusted the traces of the road from her dress, and assisted her to remount the chariot when it was put right again. Next day they met under the Procuratie. He was thanked, said pretty things, and was asked to dinner. They went in a gondola to see the ceremony of the Marriage of the Adriatic, for it was at the time of that *fiesta*, and Casanova said, after a little preparatory skirmishing, "I dare to hope that you will to-day give me the delight I would have from your charms, or else, after dinner I must make my final adieu."

Another time, finding himself alone in a carriage with a pretty woman, whom he had courted hitherto without success, he managed to obtain her consent when a thunderstorm came on and she clung to him, terrified of the vivid lightning. In spite of the roving eye of the postilion, Casanova cynically notes that his "victory was most complete." Let us hasten to say, however, that such curt love-making, the

haste of a soldier, was not his usual manner in *galanterie*.

Without any doubt he did not form a definite plan like Valmont in the *Liaisons dangereuses*, to seduce the wife of the President of Tourvel. His conquests were in general more facile, but if he made love to wantons, whose money allowed them every caprice, it was but an interlude when nothing else offered. Such love affairs were never interesting to him. By throwing herself at his head, a woman lost the most powerful of her attractions. Better those who, on the other hand, by modesty or will, resisted him at first, or at least put up a fight before yielding. He did not like to conquer too easily.

To our Adventurer, continued adventure was a necessity. His adventures in love are the most vividly described, and the most realizable. He loved the unexpected, the risk and the happy events which appeared in the midst of danger. "It is impossible," he wrote, "to enjoy a pleasure that does not follow some pain, and enjoyments are only great in proportion to the difficulties beforehand" (i. 404). The complicated intrigues, disguises, masques, all the underworld who filled the casinos and gondolas of Venice, or the secret carriages of Paris which led to strange rendezvous, all these were agreeable adjuncts to his love-making. He was ready to seduce a wife under her husband's nose, a girl under her mother's vigilance, a fiancée the morning of her nuptials. To assuage the desires of a wrongly cloistered nun he showed every kind of bravery and all sorts of subterfuges. In all such works he was in his element, and played his part for the unknown with every kind of zeal, bravery, and decision, utilizing the smallest

advantage, full of energy, tenacity, and resource. These love affairs, in which he so greatly delighted, gave him in return delightful recollections.

If he showed much ability in conquering material difficulties, he showed as much address in seduction itself. He had a veritable instinct amounting to genius in making the right choice. It was this genius which made him desire, under the appearance of Bellino, the gentle Thérèse, and under her disguise as an officer, the tender Henriette, and beneath her distant air, the voluptuous nature of Mme. F. Thanks to this clever diagnosis, he was able to carry his affairs through. Although very seductive, he was not invincible. He knew, however, to make his address only to those who liked him.

When he was undecided about the sentiments of a lady, he played a waiting game, which was simplicity itself. He became her *Cavaliere servente*.

The custom of the *Sigisbeo*, very much favoured in Venice during the eighteenth century, constituted an extravagant form of gallantry. The perfect *Sigisbeo* consecrated himself blindly to the service of a lady. Full of care and affability, he laid himself out to execute all her desires and whims, however fantastic they might be. It was he who regulated all her amusements, arranged the menu, presented her mask and summoned the gondola. He accompanied her to the theatre, to the balls, to the gambling-house, accompanied her all through the day. Next morning the zealous slave was on duty again as soon as his lady deigned to awaken. Then he assisted at her toilette, gave the news of the day and helped in selecting the costume and the laces. Nothing was too complicated for him, and he gave many proofs

of vigilance and tact. He was not a lover. He was a personage, strange, almost unreal, half serious, half burlesque ; romantic and practical at the same time, the true hero of Italian comedy. He in a way filled the place of a faithful servant, a duenna and a page. "How foolish is our career," says a Sigisbeo in one of Goldoni's comedies, "we are slaves to amuse ourselves, and submit to the foolish extravagances of a woman, in order to have the great honour of being included among her *Cavalieri serventi*." *

Obviously this passive and honorific rôle would not suit Casanova for any length of time, but it was a commencement, and he utilized the privilege of being a Sigisbeo as a step in progress to be a lover later.

This King of Lovers became a lover full of tender thoughts and pretty speeches ; he kept back his military ardour and retarded by his own will the moment of his happiness. He feared, by too swift a courtship, to shock the susceptibilities of her whose love he wished to awaken. He pretended that he was worthy of the love he asked for, and wished all to be yielded with a kind of spontaneity that was the result of real conquest. That is why so often he seems to have been so long in accomplishing his victories, content day by day with a new gain. Compliments, presents, and kindnesses led to more favours, kindnesses, sighs, declarations, until the subject pursued could not escape. A diplomat of the first order, no one knew better than he how to make the march of events seem inevitable and, so to speak, logical. This method of tactics was what he followed in the most difficult and perhaps most interesting episodes in his career of gallantry.

* Goldoni, *Le Cavalier et la Dame ou les Sigisbées*, Act I, Scene 10.

It needed a large experience of women. But who had more knowledge of the mysteries of their hearts and their caprices? In different ways he vanquished each in the way she liked best, conforming to her humour or her secret wishes. With Henriette he used kindness as a means, with Esther his wit, with Mme. Dubois, frankness, with M.M. intrigue. It was by these various ways, always favourable, that he advanced towards the same goal, always veiling in a wonderful way the approach of his success as a lover, under the most alluring dressing.

And the reason for these manœuvres, so unnecessary to such a man, was that all such schemes themselves gave him immense pleasure, and Casanova appreciated pleasure too much not to class in its right grade each quality it owned. Yet the true reason of so many subterfuges and such care must be sought for in himself. If he knew women well, he knew himself better. Nothing could vex him like a check, nothing offend him like a snub. That is what his mind taught him, and he went cautiously, not for the sake of the morals of his victim, but on account of his own *amour propre*. The best horseman knows that he may be thrown any time by a vicious mount, but he is none the less ashamed if he loses his stirrups before witnesses. He never wanted to be mortified by the refusal of a woman—an inferior sex in his opinion. That is why he chose his victims with such care and went on with his scheme with an art which was both prudent and sure. This fear of being humiliated explains how he was content to leave certain women whom he might have added to his list, for instance, Lucie of Pasean, the Marquise G. at Rome, and many others. This

was by no means from timidity or for want of desire, but from excess of vanity. Anything that would have wounded the last left in him a rankling wound. So that when, for instance, his tactics went wrong and he made love to La Charpillon, who scorned and mocked at him, his fury became overpowering and he became ill with rage.

In any case, whatever were his motives as a lover, he was a perfect model of a Don Juan. One may say that in him was incarnate the type of the period between 1750 and 1760. He assumed the complete freedom from morality which was born in France at the time of the Regency, and spread throughout Europe, though his cynicism was less brutal and his debauches less loud.

On the other hand, he was not untouched by that false sentimentality introduced by *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.* He was never pompous, tragic, jealous, or fearful. He was gay, and spontaneously so, frank, natural, neither falling into precocity nor systematic obscenity. For him, love was an amusement, an exquisite pleasure, always new and always changing while it lasted. He embellished the fact by the grace of the preceding arts and graces. It was from curiosity that it was satisfied to be born again, a caprice which allowed every liberty and every indulgence, a happy dream, where charming dreams mingle with beautiful reality. Each one brought it a certain share in the pleasure, and so on and so forth. If love is excessive for some things, it cannot be so for pleasure, but it may be satisfied, and when it is so, it is dead without any desire to resuscitate it. Once over, it was better to accept

* Published in 1761.

the fact with a smile than with ceaseless regrets. What wisdom there was in this wisdom and how reasonable were those wantons! Of a fugitive liaison, they keep only pleasant memories. They were such dilettantes of pleasure that they wished to release it from all constraint, and so keep the way clear for future loves. They were egoists and very wise.

What other ideal could they have in that period of frivolity? Later love was based on reciprocal esteem and that a moral one. But in 1750 nothing was heard of morality, only pleasure. No one could count on these gay women or butterfly males. Their hearts were hard, and their brains occupied by other interests. Love, owing to its short duration, became their amusement. Passion, on the surface only, contented itself with outward appearances and was not desirous of depth. That a woman was pretty and not shy, was enough. As Laclos said, beauty consisted in "the appearance most likely to give pleasure, the kind of being which gave the best hope for the most happy enjoyment." The mind was not thought of. Once the affair was accomplished, what did anything else matter? One only began to make love anew, here or elsewhere.

In a time that was so courtly, although the cavaliers addressed the ladies by reverences and protestations, they hardly concealed their real object. All led to the final conquest. "The man who makes his declaration otherwise than silently," says Casanova, "ought to go back to school." This was the real idea of these dashing personages. For them a woman was an object of luxury, of pleasure, a plaything. Casanova did not know real love;

he played with it. Women had no importance in his eyes, save the pleasure they gave him. That which he took for passion, was his own egotism. "On leaving a beloved one, I have often felt a heart pang, and thought that I would soon lose this charming being, but I would not say that this one alone could have made me faithful to her for ever. Still, I should like to have kept the most of those who surrendered to me. I was, perhaps, a unique specimen, as a man constant in the midst of a thousand infidelities, and always anxious to continue the present love affair, than to go on to another" (v. 392). Constant! Yes assuredly, but only to his own egotism.

It does not therefore astonish us that in spite of his "heart pang" he consoled himself with wonderful haste, that he left women after promising them a future of happiness, that he handed on his cast-off mistresses to friends, however long his intimacy had been. We are no longer surprised at his boast that he was superior to "jealousy," nor to scenes and doings which shock us while reading the *Mémoires*. Woman for him was but an instrument of pleasure, and his egotism did the rest. Casanova seems to have given his life to the illustration of the maxim of La Rochefoucauld: "There is no passion in which self-love rules as powerfully as in Love, and for it one is always ready to sacrifice the happiness of the beloved one, rather than to lose one's own."

In his most burning love affairs, he always pursued his own interest. If the lady drew back, without hesitancy he promised marriage. Conquered by desire, he sometimes seemed even to believe in the sincerity of his promise, but this did not last.

His egotism speedily returned. To show why he could not keep his word, he invented the most unexpected and the most curious reasons. "The idea of marriage, to which I did not feel myself called, made me groan" (xiv. 216). He groaned at everything that could prejudice his liberty or interfere with future pleasure. Mlle. Clairon wrote to Larive: "Then marry, if it seems good to you, but as love passes and the wife remains, I adjure you to see clearly the reality of what you gain." *

No woman was able to keep our hero long. The tenderness of Thérèse, the adoration of Manon Balletti, the voluptuous love scenes of M.M., the grace of Esther, kept him to them no more than the liaison in his old age with Francesca Buschini kept him to her. He went through love as he went through the cities of Europe, brilliant, splendid, incomparable, but always seeking for pastures new. In many of the towns the memory of the traveller was astonishing and meteoric. In many female hearts his career was the same, and his progress had left many unforgettable memories. Nay more, many years after he had abandoned them, when he met a forgotten mistress again, friendship or even love revived. For this man had the power of evoking and reviving an enduring love and admiration from his victims by the really magnetic power which was his own. He had never loved anyone really, but himself.

Such were the principal traits of Casanova's love-making. Frivolous and versatile, freed from any complication that could estrange pleasure, they were born with a smile, and might end with an embrace.

* Ed. de Goncourt, *Mademoiselle Clairon*, p. 130.

They were the loves of a true adventurer and epicurean, and very representative of his century and true to his personality. However, since the *Mémoires* often transform his doings into a romance, we are able to compare Casanova in his artifices of seduction with the romantic types which charmed his generation. We mean: Lovelace, Valmont, Faublas, and the eternal Don Juan. They are like him in certain ways, but in comparison he remains original. We have already seen that he had nothing whatever in common with the feeble, tortured, and tearful Saint-Preux. Like Don Juan, he was insatiable, and did not wish "to shroud himself forever in one passion" with the risk of all the others escaping. Like him, he held that "All the pleasure of love is in change," and like him he was able to say, "I have on this subject the ambition of those conquerors who wish to go perpetually from victory to victory, and cannot bring themselves to limit their wishes. There is nothing which can limit the impetuosity of my desires. I feel that I could be the lover of the whole world, and, like Alexander, I wish that there were other worlds in which I might spread my conquests further."* But Don Juan belonged to another time. He was a powerful lord, accustomed to see all bow before him, who could not imagine resistance to his desires, nor the notion that anyone else could think differently. So he showed himself more lofty, more distant, more brutal, and much less sympathetic. He had no concern for his victims. As soon as his desire was satisfied, he showed them not only indifference, but disdain.

Like Lovelace in *Clarissa Harlowe*, and Valmont

* Molière, *Don Juan*, Act I, Scene II.

in the *Liaisons dangereuses*, Casanova knew intrigue and its nets, and like them he was a past-master in the tactics of *galanterie*. But Lovelace, under a captivating appearance, hid real desire. He employed love, but in the end, fierce vengeance to destroy the heart of a woman. Valmont, on the other hand, used seduction for the accomplishment of evil. He was an artist in mental tortures, a roué who sniggered at the misfortunes he had provoked, and who enjoyed his viciousness most in the ruins it created. Both Lovelace and Valmont went forth to satisfy their evil natures, armed with the hypocrisy of a Machiavelli. Casanova himself, however, placed the finest diplomacy at the service of Pleasure. He was full of joviality and frankness, and, if only his vanity was satisfied and his self-love not wounded, he allowed himself to partake of it with those who captivated him—and to the full.

Some things in him resembled Faublas. He had his amiability, charm, unscrupulousness, and the same smiling sensuality. However, Casanova was better guided, more intelligent, knew more and was more master of himself. In no case did he allow himself to entertain thoughtlessness to such an extent that it became the cause of the worst catastrophies, and hastened to create round the too weak Faublas a dramatic atmosphere.

But the difference between Casanova and his rivals in fiction is precisely that which exists between a human being and a creature of the imagination. The Venetian seems more human, more lifelike, and so, more natural. The heroes of Molière, Richardson, Laclos, and Louvet de Coudray obey the will of their creator with career, attitudes, words, and gestures,

according to the grace of the writing and course of the tale. Casanova, on the other hand, struggled through life as a swimmer in a current in which he finds himself. He had to take the rough with the smooth. He was a man with polymorphous ideas, uncertain sentiments, pleasures always renewed and never sufficiently, a feeble man carried away in spite of his resistance by the universal determination of things. A simple mortal who, by each attempt, and each success, was brought one step nearer old age and towards the grace.

In spite of the embellishments with which he prepared them, and in spite of his imaginative nature and his conscious lies, the great majority of Casanova's love affairs bear the stamp of reality. Very lively figures crowd in his pages round the brilliant Adventurer. All are without thought of the future, without hypocrisy, half veiling by their grace and smiles the inevitable end of their caprice, and asking from pleasure the dubious enchantment which allows one to forget for a few seconds the boredom, sadness, or disillusion of their daily life. There was no sentimental beginning, nor moralizing end. Casanova pursued his love stories for pleasure. He recounted them for the same reason and painted them with the vivid colours of life. His liaisons never became tragic. Don Juan, Lovelace, Valmont, and even the hare-brained Faublas, ended in disaster and despair. There is nothing like that in the *Mémoires*, for all is arranged for the best when he who is interested in a gallant adventure shows the disconcerting skill and the sovereign detachment of a Casanova.

Casanova considered love as a natural need to

which one was not wise to attach too great an importance and which it was allowable therefore to convert into a delightful pastime. Was this cynicism or wisdom? Was it the result of a huge experience? But it did not carry him beyond himself. In love, as in life, he remained very practical, however vain and egotistic in a princely way he was, as we have seen. Each time that one mirrors his soul, one finds him an ordinary mortal? But in his pursuit of women, more than in any other manifestation of his personality, he hid his mediocrity under so many charms, elegances, and ingenuous artifices, that it is difficult not to take the appearance for the reality. That is exactly what the women of his time did. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who possessed, it is believed, a high idea of passion and sensibility, but was disagreeable, ugly, and with only a little money, had pitiable love-affairs. Casanova, on the other hand, who regarded mistresses as delightful accidents, but gave them gaiety and amusement, was the most fêted, the most welcome, and perhaps the most loved of all the Don Juans.

II

CASANOVA AS A TRAVELLER

“To travel continually, my friend, is delightful, but one must have lost one’s father, mother, children, friends, or never have had them, to wander at ease over the habitable globe. . . .”—DIDEROT.

IN all times and seasons, in extremes of weather, in the balmy spring of Tuscany or in the bitter winter of Russia, Casanova travelled, travelled, and travelled again. Nothing made him stay or stopped him. He would go to the furthest-off destinations, to the least known countries. His field was the whole of Europe. He crossed and crossed in every way with plans made in the utmost haste by most unexpected zigzag journeys, like those of a blue-bottle which flies round a room in its busy importunity, coming, going, settling for a moment, leaving with renewed buzzing, descending, hitting itself against things—and beginning again.

One finds him everywhere. He goes, during a few months, from the lovely views of Lombardy, or Ile-de-France, indifferently through the noble beauty of Provence, or the damp air of the English countryside, coursed through the Dutch roads, the flat country of Prussia, or the Russian steppe. He rides on mule-back in the midst of Spanish deserts, ascended the winding roads of the Pyrenees,

the gorges of the Apennines, sailed on the Mediterranean in a Venetian war-vessel, takes a modest goods boat on the Adriatic, gets on a hired packet in the Pas-de-Calais, or goes down the Rhône towards Avignon in the water-coach. Then, coming to the end of his journey, another calls him and off he goes at once; and if, by chance, he desires to stay on at a place which pleases him, circumstances generally make him leave.

This life had become a perpetual journey. He went hither and thither to do some business, to prepare some scheme, find one of his lost mistresses, carry through some mysterious mission, fly from the police—or from pure fancy he went off again. At Genoa he passed the night in amorous frolics, at dawn he left. At Paris he dined at a cabaret, paid too much, insulted the hostess, overcame some busybody who interposed, wounded him and fled to Dresden. At Cezena, on the eve of going to Naples, he met a pretty woman, and with her went instead to Parma. He found himself at the theatre, at the gaming table or the ball—whatever gaiety was present, in fact—some hours later his carriage rolled away, and by galloping on the post-horses he got across the frontier. His life was unstable and in a state of flux at the moment. When his fortune seemed made he had to fly into another country.

His itineraries are extraordinary when one remembers the difficulties, the fatigues, and the expense of a journey in his day. Here are his principal stopping places in a *circuit* he made in 1760–61: Paris, Cologne, Stuttgart, Zurich, Solure, Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Annecy, Aix-les-Bains,

Grenoble, Avignon, Marseilles, Toulon, Antibes, Villefranche, Nice, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Modenci, Parma, Turin, Chambéry, Lyon, Paris, Strasbourg, Augoberevy, Munich, Constance, Bâle, Paris, and in each town he rested, played the grand seigneur, gambled, and had time to meet the best society—and the worst, to play for high stakes, and make conquest after conquest. In 1763 he left Milan and got to London, quitted that town, ran through Brussels and Berlin and ended the year at St. Petersburg, after having been as far as Riga. He set out for his first voyage of adventure in 1743, when he was eighteen; he finished his last at seventy-two, in 1797, some weeks before his death. A great part of his life was spent in travelling on the high roads, and even now we do not know all the places he visited.

Such a fleet, wandering career astonishes us. The most restless among us, with all the modern facilities of transport, trains de luxe, automobiles, Atlantic liners, aeroplanes—most of us seem, compared to Casanova, stay-at-home or sedentary folk. The most determined traveller, the most intrepid explorer, taking his ease where he finds it and hoping some day to get back to his country, city, faubourg, house, kin, and ordinary life; but this was not the situation of our Vagabond. Casanova was exiled from Venice for three long years. He had no country, and indeed no home, and nothing to attract him to any place by either a material or a moral chain. So he was essentially cosmopolitan and nomadic. A citizen of the whole of Europe he felt in his own country, where he found his pleasure or his interest lay. Everywhere

he satisfied his passion for women and play. Everywhere he showed off his fine figure and fine wit. Everywhere he had adventures, intrigues—and dupes. In each important town he knew the people who would receive him, entertain him, love his society, laugh at his stories and wit—at least for a time. He found the necessary movement, protection, friends, and loves; and he slyly knew how to use each of these advantages to the day of his departure, and he would use them again on his return, which, however far off it might be, was always possible.

For him it was always necessary to change his surroundings, for his peculiar qualities soon lost their effects, and his unbounded vanity drove him on to seek more success in another country. When his successes were over he still continued his wandering life. Although in his old age he discovered a refuge at Dux, he was not content therewith, and, escaping from it as often as he could, made sudden sallies to Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Hamburg, Berlin, only re-entering the Castle of Waldstein through need, that is, when he had spent his last penny and had nothing to pay either for a meal or a bed. He came back abashed, humiliated, and despairing, but looking forward to his next escapade.

It was not a light affair to be a traveller at that period. All civilization was centred in the large towns. From one to another of these there were few of its resources. Communication was difficult, the roads sometimes terrible, full of quagmires, sometimes difficult to find, filthy ruts in winter and dusty simoons in summer. Contemporary romances, *mémoires*, and letters as well as engravings abound

in illustrations of the hundreds of accidents that happened to the traveller by the awfulness of the roads. By a violent jolt an axle or trace might break or a wheel roll off, the carriage might overturn, the tired horses turn restive, the postilion, weighed down by his boots, would groan or swear. The peasants would then rush to see the calamity, and the surgeon would be on the spot to bleed any fainting lady back to life. Casanova, as an old campaigner, was familiar with all these adventures. He was himself upset not far from Naples, and though the arm of his companion was broken, he wrote, proud of his experience and superiority, "As for myself, accustomed to these kind of accidents, it did me no harm, for much depends on knowing how to place oneself in the carriage" (v. 6). Whoever went on a journey was forced to bear jolting, stiffness, and weariness, if not to have one's sides or legs bruised by an overturn; and lucky if one's money was not stolen or one's luggage rifled in the fray. There was also the additional trial of want of sleep from the dirt of the rooms, and sometimes of hunger.

One found certainly in the town hotels which provided good beds and good cooking for their clients, but one could not be too fastidious; but the scourge was the village inn, where by or against one's will one was forced into sleep in as the only alternative for spending the night under the stars. There one met every horror or danger. There, without remorse, the host made the most of the traveller's necessity. There flourished fleas, bugs, and rats, the clouds of flies, dirt unbounded, the traces of bygone foods with their attendant odours, dirty linen, and the smells of drains, if such things

chanced to exist. Nay, more, the postmasters were tyrants, their horses screws, their post-chaises instruments of torture into which one packed as one could. The postilion, in spite of his bad reputation, was generally a dirty creature, a countryman occupied in extracting from his travellers, in the most direct manner possible, the largest tips, a thief, tampering with the luggage if he could, sometimes a robber, in league with the brigands at the corner of the wood. If one went by water it was much worse, there were all these inconveniences and many more. All these disagreeable things and innumerable others became ordinary events to unfortunates on their travels. This does not agree well with the conventional insipidity of the eighteenth century as represented to us in sham *Vernis Martin*, a rose at the corner of the lips, the fashionable curl, the shoulder ribbon, and the guitar ready to be sounded; nor is it the eighteenth century when coaches full of laughter are preceded by brilliantly dressed postilions, of servants always full of affability, and of hostesses always kind and even disinterested! The world was not so. To travel in Casanova's time, one needed a hearty appetite, a supple back, and to be an easy sleeper, as well as much optimism and patience. If the end of the journey was beautiful or even only agreeable, what did the means of accomplishing it matter? And then the taste for travelling gilded many things. With a little imagination the unexpected became delightful and the constant change became enchanting.

As a matter of fact, people travelled a great deal in the eighteenth century, as much as they were

allowed to, in fact. The great highways were full of the most different kinds of travellers. There were adventurers running from capital to capital hoping for good luck, riches, or for their daily bread. Writers seeking an asylum or protection, artists seeking for their masterpiece; seekers, curious to know the customs and the laws of foreign countries; actors eager for engagements, and gentlemen desirous of giving instruction. It is not surprising, therefore, that Casanova should make, during his wanderings, so many unexpected meetings, sometimes pleasant, sometimes so unpleasant, debtors or creditors, former loves or else witnesses who knew too much about his dubious past. They made friends by chance at Naples or at Chambéry, they had a banquet, they played cards, they were poor together, ate together, and sometimes slept in the same room. They either made friends or quarrelled desperately. They left each other, to and themselves together again two years later either at The Hague or St. Petersburg.

As the century went on, travelling entered into public life. In 1775 Turgot regulated traffic definitely in France. Services of posts were organized between Paris and the big provincial towns, daily, weekly, or twice weekly. Life had become more agitated, more swift.

"I assure you," wrote Mozart, "that if one does not travel, one is nothing, really, but a poor creature."

In the eyes of Mozart, Casanova can by no means have been a "poor creature." He enjoyed over and above this the well-earned reputation among his contemporaries of being a traveller who was, no sooner he reached a house, well informed about

the local habits, who knew the best hotels to go to, what great people to visit, what one had to do in regard to the customs or the police, where one found amusement to what extent one might let oneself go in them, and what tips one must give. Whether he landed at Marseilles or Warsaw he used his short time with presence of mind, cleverness, and social tact. On the road no one could equal him and his skill in getting as much ease and comfort as possible, and this even when his funds were so low that no one could think they would even allow a long journey.

He loved his ease, especially in a carriage. In the course of his interminable journeys, he felt the need of stretching his knees when he liked, to get out, yawn or doze when he wished. To be bored with something or some one was an intolerable torment. It might be all right for the poor creatures who crowded in the coaches, who had not the wit to get money in any way. In his eyes money never counted. A poor devil, that Panurge! He had only sixty-three ways of procuring it. Casanova had a thousand! So he generally travelled like a lord. He descended at the most celebrated hotels, *l'Epée* at Zurich, the *Treize Cantons* at Marseilles, Saint-Omar at Avignon, the *Balances* at Geneva, the *Bras d'Or* at Calais. What did expense matter! "I made him serve an excellent dinner for me, for one must begin like that in a grand hotel" (ii. 44). That was his grand manner. He arrived at Milan in a carriage for four drawn by six horses; and, thanks to his generosity and his fine appearance, he was taken straight to the best hotel, although he had only three ducats in his pocket. The next day would be time for him to find more money.

God, luck, or his own ingenuity would give it to him. Meanwhile he ranked as a man of quality. This was necessary, for the world was then governed by appearances, and, if one was nobody, it was before everything else necessary to seem to be somebody.

The hotel keepers being thieves, and the postilions hounds, it was essential to cow that difficult crew by appearing rich—the only thing which touched them. In this rôle Casanova was inimitable. He was tall, strong armed, had a stern eye and a fine vocabulary when roused. He used his cane too with dexterity, and scarcely hid his pocket pistols. Besides which, his wealth made an impression and the best was expected. Everything was done to serve so high a personage. The Chevalier de Seingalt, on a mission for the King of France; the Chevalier de Seingalt going in a splendid equipage to the Court of the Empress of Russia, or to meet Voltaire, or to be received by the Pope. He took care that no one did not know of his presence. He gave orders, he stormed, he was furious, he had “a kind of necessity to rage like a noble lord” (v. 7). He exaggerated his importance and exploited it to the last degree. No obstacle or person must come between him and his wishes. It would seem that the Secretary of the State, the prosperity of the finances, all depend on his journey.

For him, this grand seigneur, had to be displayed all the best resources of the hotel, the largest room, the softest bed. All the servants must do his bidding, and the best horses be kept for him, and in this way Casanova threw dust in the eyes of his contemporaries and deceived other adventurers them-

selves about his financial status, to the great aggrandizement of his own satisfaction and his own vanity.

He liked to travel by post-chaise. Its quickness was agreeable to his haste and his love of speed. But what he liked most was a berline, which pleased him by its size. It was suitable, and made a good show. It was like a boudoir on wheels, where one could entertain a pretty woman with agreeable witticisms, read a new book, rest after past fatigues, or prepare a gambling trap for to-morrow. It could shut, which was convenient in bad weather, but in the fine season the lowered glasses allowed the occupant to breathe the country air. A well,* suitably filled with provisions, allowed pleasant interludes. At night, if the hotel did not seem sufficiently comfortable, he slept in his berline. "I slept better in my carriage than in the bad beds we found in the inns" (v. 9). It was in this manner that he journeyed from St. Petersburg to Riga, accompanied by a charming actress from Paris, La Valville. "I put a mattress in the carriage and we made a sort of bed where we were in great comfort. . . . I had in my carriage some bottles of good wine and some delightful chicken as well as this charming woman. Comus, Momus, and Venus all together. My journey was nothing but a long series of delights" (vi. 132).

Comus, Momus, and Venus! These were the pleasures he preferred. He never worked for others during his eternal peregrinations except to exhibit his vanity at each place. The spectacles the universe could produce left him quite indifferent. He had no idea what a view was. This man, who for fifty

* A place for provisions under the foot of the "berline."

years went about the whole of Europe, knew nothing whatever of the pleasures evoked by the beauty of the country or the picturesqueness of a landscape which was new to him. In spite of his incessant contact with nature, he never suspected the immense influence it would very soon extend over the thoughts and sentiments of mankind. How different to Jean-Jacques Rousseau! Casanova never knew the infinite pleasure of sleeping under the everlasting stars or in a spring night when the nightingale sings.* He was part of the preceding period which, according to Sainte-Beuve's phrase, did not know the word "green" in literature. He travelled through valleys and mountains, fields and flat countries, pastures and forests, but none of these had any meaning to him. Their views, always changing, did not break the monotony of the journey. What passed, outside his carriage, had no interest for him. "I set out (for Rome) in a berline, with a lady who went to Notre Dame at Loretto to fulfil a vow that she had made during the illness of her daughter. The daughter was with her also. She was ugly. I had a very tiresome journey" (i. 283). Some years after this, going down the Rhone in a boat, he never dreamt of looking at the scenery on the banks of that famous river, not at all. "I slept in the boat and did not wake until I reached Avignon" (iv. 323). The time that Comus, Momus, and Venus did not fill was filled by the incidents of the journey, by disputes with inn-keepers, postilions, with customs house officers or bores, by the surprise of a meeting or the chance of a love affair, otherwise the time was utterly lost.

* J. J. Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, vol. iv.

No scenery is mentioned in the *Mémoires*. In the whole course of the long narrative there is no mention of the grass growing, the flowers which scent the air, nor the quivering of leaves. Not the least ray of natural sun or the slightest rustle of the breeze of nature. If the place forced Casanova to describe a celebrated spot, his description was cold, conventional, and uncoloured. So prolix before the beauty of a woman, he remained silent in the presence of nature. He does not describe the beauty of the Borromean Isles, for he says (and rightly) his description would fall below their "captivating reality." Having wished to visit the Fontaine de Vaucluse, he gives us on the subject of the famous spring this valuable confidence: "It is a work of nature which the art of man cannot imitate" (vi. 332). But when he found himself with a learned youth or with a pretty girl he showed off, evoked Laura, cited Petrarch and his books, and exhibited all the signs of emotion before the poet's house. "I threw myself on the ruins, my arms extended as if to embrace him, I moistened them with my tears, and I attempted to breathe the divine spirit which had animated them" (iv. 333).

He had the same want of understanding among works of art. His knowledge of painters, poets, and men of letters had given him, it is true, a varnish of art, but plastic arts did not mean much to him, and he preferred scholarship or humanism. "Though I do not boast of being an antiquarian, I like the antiquities quite enough, and especially the Roman ones" (vi. 276). One cannot, when reading the *Mémoires*, doubt this. If he was interested in them it was because antiquities were the fashion, and

that they allowed him to spread himself in historical knowledge. The majesty, harmony, and elegance of the great monuments did not impress him. He was very silent about the artistic wealth, ancient or modern, he must have met during his continuous journeys. He says nothing of the marvels of Venice—his own city. At distant intervals he writes: "Next day (at Modena) I went out to see the pictures" (v. 33), or else at Pola, "I consecrated a couple of hours to visiting the Roman antiquities which have been found there" (i. 177). Again, in London, "In the morning I went to the British Museum where I saw some excellent paintings by Rubens and Van Dyck" (v. 437). What struck him at Cologne among the "mock-heroic marvels of that great town" was "Bayard's horse sung by Ariosto mounted by the fair sons of Aimon." He "laughed heartily" (iv. 13). At Toledo he admired the size of the Tabernacle carried in processions, and the reputed vase which held the thirty pieces of silver of Judas (vi. 254). Was it worth his trouble to go so far to wonder at such childishness?

With little real artistic sense, examining a mantel-piece to him was an interlude. On his journeys he had a thousand more important preoccupations and more interesting pleasures. The beauties of Tivoli were in his eyes nothing like these of the lovely Dona Lucrezia. Like Madame Du Noyer, he could say, "A living talent touches me more than all the antiquities put together."* But if Casanova remained insensible before the beauties of nature and the attractions of art, he, on the other hand, seized

* Mme. Du Noyer, *Lettres historiques et galantes*. Cologne, Pierre Marteau (1723), i. 136.

with clear insight each peculiarity of the towns he passed through and the essential characters of the people with which he came in contact.

To begin with Venice. No one knew her better than he, no one knew her genius better at her illustrious decline. From past ages she had preserved her majesty, her prestige, and her pride. Her appearances had not changed. She rose from the waters still, an enigma and a paradox. Above the wish-wash of the lagoons were seen the heavy cupolas of San Marco and the crowd of domes and flowers. She was always beautiful, and withal had always below the surface an element of mystery and drama. Proud of old institutions which had brought her to power, she kept intact their rites and their ceremonials. At certain times, the basilica, the Piazza di San Marco, the Palace of the Doges, the canals and the lagoons were filled with mediæval pomp. But it was nothing but a shadowy glory; what gave birth to it had disappeared for ever. In the time of Casanova, though she looked splendid and brilliant, she was but an empty shell. Full of the wildest pleasure, but of a kind which had destroyed all serious thoughts and any serious work. Each night gaiety recommenced, and at dawn the Herbania saw groups of revellers come to breathe the morning air before going back to bed for an unproductive day. Away with business! Who cares for the future! It was a city where this heedlessness of carnival time seemed perpetual.

Such was Venice, dying, in its two aspects, one tragic, one gay; and both came to light in the pages of the *Mémoires*, with all the ceremonies and fantasies, rigid laws, and folly, beauty, and gaiety.

The picture of Naples, more rapidly put on paper, is painted in colours no less lively. In that town of sunlight round the enchanting bay one thinks all life should unfold into harmony and pleasure. High life jostled with low, great palaces were in the middle of dirty streets. The count mingled with the crowd ; but in the lovely atmosphere and the friendly sun, all became friendly and equal, velvet and rags, marble and dirt. Life went on from day to day without useless labour, without needless work. Why should one look forward and make plans ? The Neapolitan was happy if he had a bonnet on his head and a shirt—through which the sea breezes might blow if it was in holes—on his back. Careless, he dabbled his naked foot in the streams on the quays or the mud of the beach. A crust and some shell-fish were enough for his hunger, and if he had nothing for supper on the morrow he sang for it. The least work possible was done, and done with gaiety and carelessness which gave full scope for indulgence. A laughing philosophy emanated from the roadside, “ *Carpe diem*,” as Horace sang. The Neapolitans were of this opinion, and Casanova, who venerated Horace, loved Naples and the Neapolitans. In their happy town he had met with nothing but luck and happiness. Nothing was more agreeable to him than the easy morality of the inhabitants, their real welcome, their ease in living, their naive enthusiasm, and even their superficiality. They received the newcomer as an intimate friend, and addressed him as such.

To change the scene. Casanova went to London. London is in the country enveloped in an eternal mist comprised of smoke and mist. A sad town, a

“cursed” town, the city of deceptions. To Casanova, as to many of his contemporaries, London seemed from afar the ideal city where order, liberty, and justice existed, for the vaunted liberty of the institutions of England excited the admiration of those who, dreaming of better things, wished, amidst the crumbling theories of their states, a rational government. Casanova, who had been interested in most things, knew of this, and for a long time had wished to come to London. His fertile imagination represented it as a kind of Eden where wisdom and law triumphed. He was disappointed! The refined and enthusiastic Italian nurtured in the south came suddenly into an atmosphere of fog and darkness. He found himself among Anglo-Saxons rude and positive, practical without finesse, and hard, who believed themselves superior to the rest of mankind and who were completely lacking in the “sensitivity” which was so dear, at the time, to the continental. There was little gaiety, little imagination, and only a tiresome uniformity. The friends of independence seemed to give up individual liberty for the benefit of society at large. He was shocked by what he saw and when he found that the only standard was monetary value. He saw men fighting each other under the cold eye of their backers. All the faces seemed to him “made in one mould,” and he only saw “features like parrots on nut-crackers with pinched mouths opening to utter strident noises, to eat great pieces of bread and butter and drink huge cups of tea” (v. 468). These differences in customs, morals, and temperament Casanova felt very deeply. He was in a strange land, he was afraid. Driven into himself, bored and

unhappy, he was constantly plunged in an invincible dullness.

The Dutch, on the other hand, left an agreeable impression on his mind. He loved their good humour, their peaceful ways, their patriarchal ways ; their admirable habits of order and cleanliness. The noted merchants there were yet honest, perhaps by policy. Although they were clumsy in manner and gross in appetites, this was only on the surface. Their intelligence had been enlarged by the habit of long voyages and developed by the acquaintance of strange people. When they had satisfied the dull needs of life their will was directed to gain pastures new without noise or flourish of trumpets. Arts, science, and philosophy found in this people a fertile field and a certain shelter. Any book forbidden by the Inquisition had a jumping-off ground from Holland into the world. In Holland liberty was very real, they loved it in every place and claimed it for themselves, with tact, but also with firmness. They were polite, amiable, and receptive, and this wise policy made them universal favourites.

St. Petersburg, but lately built in the middle of marshes by the obstinacy of Peter the Great, and erected far more by force and violence than by ordinary masonry, gave to the onlooker an appearance of waste land, of palaces and barracks, of pompous gardens, filled with idiotic statues. Peter I. had resolved to adopt for his subjects the civilization of Paris and London. It was a grand idea, but a foolish one. For he could not suddenly change the mentality of the people, nor inspire in them customs, an ideal of thought, and art to which they were strangers. So St. Petersburg seemed to him

somewhat premature, unfinished. It was a western town built in a strange country and an impossible climate. The real Russians hated it, and would not live in it; but on the other hand, one met there the whole band of international sharpers and adventurers brought there by the hope of easy trickery and unlawful profits.

Moscow, on the other hand, was an Asiatic town quite surprised to find itself in Europe. There the real Russians had their being. They had oriental minds so different from ours that the two mentalities, it seemed, could never understand each other. Casanova suspected this difficulty, and remained confounded by it. The Slav people he studied through its worst aspects, and he shows them to us as marplots, incoherent, violent, treacherous, superstitious, and fatalists. He judges them as an inferior race, almost barbarous, brutal, and with impulses which "Still savour of the Sarmatian or the Scythian" (vi. 139).

We come now to Paris. Nothing equalled Paris. It had all the attractions, the charms, the delights. It had in itself universal beauty and added a charm of its own. Under its happy climate, sun from the heats of the south, and the cold of the north, life becomes swift and lively. Thoughts came easily. Arts developed in all directions. There were country women charming, and wit was everywhere. The renown, the glory, the richness of Paris were the model for all Europe. Her civilization influenced the most distant towns. They read Voltaire at St. Petersburg, at Stockholm, at Lisbon. Berlin was adorned with monuments and gardens in the French manner, and the Louis XV. shell-work

decorated the mysterious Turkish Palaces in Constantinople. Paris influenced all, impressed all, directed all. And it drew to itself every one who thought, wrote, or wished to be smart. It was the case of Paris first, and then Europe round Paris. Voltaire was correct when he said, "Paris is the father of Society."

And Paris was the adopted city of Casanova. He saw it under a perpetual enchantment. The streets and the air both filled him with joy. The Palais-Royal was the heart of Paris. There one met men of business, loungers, and pretty women, and was surrounded with smart restaurants and cafés. There were sold newspapers, the newest book, the latest trinket. The news circulated, speeding from mouth to mouth. There one regulated one's watch by the meridian, filled one's snuff-box at *La Civette*. Here was the liveliness of a well-dressed crowd—lively, sympathetic, frivolous, and delightful. Here were theatres. The Opera, where one listened in silence, and where "the orchestra was excellent." The *Comédie Française*, where the great masterpieces were played according to tradition and with perfect taste, the *Comédie Italienne*, which adapted the Venetian gaiety a little to the Parisian taste. Here were the Ministers and the King, Louis XV., "the handsome king," and the Court of Versailles. Here was the world of letters, arts, finance, theatre, and of gallantry. Paris made Casanova happy, it made him drunk! It was the most delightful town, full of enchanting chances, where dreams easily came true, whose men with noble names soon became one's boon companions, and where great ladies abandoned all their pride, and where shopkeepers' wives were dowered with good manners. Pleasure

became the business of life and business was made a pleasure. The Parisians were gay, happy, intelligent, loving everything new, amusing conversation, and good cookery. They were rather vain, rather idle, rather hasty, but full of liveliness and frankness. In fact, the Parisians were the people of his choice. If one flattered them, the newcomer who had the gift of conversation and tact could become in a day king of fashion there and the man of the moment.

It would be easy to multiply more examples of his ideas of men and manners from the *Mémoires*. Rome was honeycombed with ecclesiastical intrigues. Spain dominated with rigid prejudice, poverty, and pride. The little towns of Germany were so peaceful and monotonous that "sensuality killed itself." Marseilles was noted for its quays full of foreign merchandise, with foreigners in every kind of costume talking every kind of tongue. Vienna was eaten up with hypocrisy and dullness. He always gave the right criticism, the true opinion of an intelligent traveller who could see and judge correctly. Casanova never consciously described anything; his impressions came naturally, deduced from anecdotes and almost unconscious revelations. He had assimilated so many countries, and their customs came so easily to him that as he describes them we can breathe their atmosphere. He can, in telling us of the great cities of his time, revive their pomp or their decline, their elegance or their coarseness, and so, while amusing us, he has given a picture of the Europe of his time, the eighteenth century, and the most lively and most instructive picture that exists.

But one would falsify the character of Casanova

if one were to describe him only as a real vagabond—as a lover of a traveller's nomadic life. He did not travel for his own amusement only. His departures were often forced on him by a very real necessity, such as to escape a caning, or from the police. During his whole life he remembered the terrors he endured during his imprisonment in the Piombi, and he was resolved never again to suffer such a horror. But as he did not reform his ideas, his habits, or his mode of life, how was he able to live in a country without providing some scandal? He continued to cheat at cards, to suborn pretty girls, pass false notes, and deal in every kind of chicane and abuse of trust, associate with the worst class of persons, mix himself up with the most dubious dealings, yet rant and fulminate against the law of the country. For these reasons he was forced continually to move on to escape private vengeance, or the arm of the law.

“*Vir fugiens denuo pugnavit.*” * His first action was to get out of the danger zone and beyond pursuit. But as he got further, he regained his assurance and audacity. Out of his flight he made capital, until it became a triumphal journey. When he had passed a frontier, or got to a safe distance, he did not hide from his new friends the reasons which led to his arrival. But, nevertheless, he gave them a colour with so much eloquence and tact that pleaded so much in his favour that he was received as a wronged being and so consoled. “From the time I found good people were curious to know the story how misfortune had overtaken me when I told it to them, I inspired in them both friendship and interest which was both favourable and useful to me” (i. 147).

* A quotation from Horace in *L'Histoire de ma Fuite*.

And so he came to the stage that he deceived himself, he forgot that he was a sharper, played the victim, regarded himself as innocent, although persecuted by injustice and envy.

So it was in cities—not in the country—that he found his chief interests. He was always playing some game on strangers, but yet always ready, at the given moment, to escape from the police far afield.

He travelled also for “business”? Curious “business” it was. It consisted in systematic exploitation of his contemporaries through the ways we knew which certainly were not lacking in originality. The most special which he employed by preference, and from which he drew his best results in filling his purse, was the practice of Cabbala. He never stuck at anything. Cabbala was good in sorcery, magic, derivation, incantation, to draw a horoscope, find lost objects, discover treasures, heal the sick, give beauty to those who needed it, and youth to old people, riches to every one. If there was no one at hand, he laid nets for victims. He took plenty of trouble, but he obtained often brilliant results.

But, last of all, when we see that Casanova was permitted for so many years to practise this art (the only one that agreed with his peripatetic life), one may suspect, and not without some truth, that he had some money as travelling agent of the Freemasons.

This association may be derived from very old brotherhoods. But, as a matter of fact, its modern organization came from England, and dates from the early years of the eighteenth century. By 1750 the chief towns of Europe possessed very prosperous

lodges,* and their lodges had connection one with the other.

The *adeptes* brought in recruits from all sorts of classes and from all sorts of places. They received by preference those who by profession, talent, rank, or place, were able to have some social influence. Among the Brotherhood many illustrious names are found: the Comte de Clermont, the Prince de Conti, the Duc d'Antin, the Maréchal de Saxe, Choiseul, Malesherbes, d'Argenson, Plombal, the Empress Catherine II., and, among philosophers and writers, Voltaire, d'Alembert, Helvetius, Condorcet, Diderot, etc., etc. Nobles, judges, magistrates, ecclesiastics also were affiliated in numbers. The army rapidly became a vast field for propaganda. In almost every regiment a Masonic hall united a group of important officers, and this regimental lodge had constant intercourse with the local lodge. Women also attempted to participate in this great and mysterious movement. There was the "Masonry of Adoption," founded in Paris in 1730. The Duchesse de Bourbon, the Duchesse de Chartres, and the Princesse de Lamballe were all Grand Mistresses.

Thus Freemasonry became rapidly a formidable organization, which permeated different steps of Society. The official powers disapproved of it. In France, from 1737 Fleury, Minister to Louis XV., forbade Masonic meetings. Next year, Pope Clement XII., by his Bull "*in eminenti*," excommunicated Freemasons. War was declared. In all countries,

* Outside England the principal lodges were Cologne (1716), Dunkerque (1721), Paris (1725), Gibraltar (1726), Madrid (1727), Bordeaux (1732), Valenciennes (1733), Hamburg (1734), Lisbon (1735), Havre (1739).

with more or less rigour and success, the adepts were persecuted, but they, on their side, bent the knee and organized themselves for a struggle.

Casanova tells us how he was received as an "apprentice" at Lyons in 1750 under the auspices of a "respectable man," met in the house of the Marquis de Rochebaron, Governor of the Lyonnais. Some months later, at Paris, he was made "Brother" and then "Master." He allows us to understand that he attained in time the higher steps of the hierarchy.

This affiliation pleased him much. The trend of the Society, the quality and importance of its members, their perfect understanding and real solidarity, seemed singularly interesting to one who was nobody, and yet wished to get on in the world. On the other hand, the initiated older members might consider the young man with so great a charm, a good talker, learned, adventurous, and with a reputation as a sorcerer, as a hopeful recruit to be utilized in all kinds of ways.

When he returned to Venice in 1753 he frequented the lodge, and made in his own city many proselytes. This was one of the chief reasons for his imprisonment in the Piombi. When, after his escape, he was able to get to Paris again, he exploited on every occasion the narrative of his captivity and flight, and assumed the airs of a martyr in a good cause. Thus he gained a halo which he knew how to wear to the best advantage. He could only do so among the initiated, who alone were ready to console, pity, or assist him. Yet he profited immensely by the situation and gained the ear of those in power. His protectors—Bernis, Paris-Duvernay, Choiseul, M. de

Boulogne—seemed attracted by the new ideas. Was it not strange that this stranger with a doubtful past should have penetrated so far, and that this fugitive from prison had been a party to establish and direct the lottery of the military school, and had been entrusted with confidential missions, that this dubious person was given *carte blanche* in Holland and a portion of the public funds? How can we explain his admission into the society of the persons in power, who often laughed at his excesses? It was not that the police were idle that he was able to get out of difficulties and steal what he liked in difficult circumstances. He was dishonest, intriguing, and clever. That we understand. But we must also understand that he could not have shown himself so, as he did, without the intervention of powerful protectors and unseen supporters who were at his back.

While the support of some “Brothers” in high places allowed him to utilize his talents, and to do well in his personal affairs, the Grand Orient cast its eye on him to be of service in its Cause. The Masonic Chiefs showed, by this, great perspicacity. It was impossible to discipline Casanova; one would always be involved in some turmoil or another, but he had good qualities, as he had bad. Extremely active, full of ability and daring, a man of resource and energy, he knew how to make the most of everything. He was chosen, therefore, for difficult and even dangerous missions to his best advantage.

It was necessary to make sure of the unity of Masonic internationalism. For this end, Masonic agents ran from lodge to lodge of provinces and countries far removed from each other, and in spite of the difficulties succeeded in transmitting orders

and directions, sifting opinion, supervising the traitors, strengthening the weak, organizing the defence, as well as assisting the propaganda.

“Increasing agents circulated from one place to another, as by an electric wire, the secrets found in the courts, colleges, chanceries, and in the law courts of all kinds. Certain unknown travellers were seen to wait in towns, whose presence, reason, and aim were a problem.” * They took grave risks, but they found powerful backers and lots of money. This last abounded, and remained unknown. “Masonry,” wrote Mirabeau, † “had immense sums for the meetings and contributions of every kind. One set saw to the paying out, but another brooded over the chests and the war funds of the Society, about which nobody, except the very thoroughly initiated, knew anything.”

To be the secret agent of the “Grand Orient” ! Was not this an excellent position for Casanova ? To run from place to place, and in the best society ; to equal them through his own high position, to risk danger, live on other people’s money, and give orders to people in authority.

He seems to have started on this new career about 1760, when he was about thirty-five. He was in his zenith, and knew everything about men and life. It was at this time that the long succession of his journeys began, of which the reason is unknown. Before that period we know the reasons why he wandered. He went to Calabria to become secretary to a bishop, to Paris to amuse himself and get money, to Holland to arrange a speculation, but

* Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution*, 11, 93.

† Mirabeau, *La Monarchie Prussienne*, vi. 87.

from the time he left Paris the second time, up to the end of 1759, his wanderings become incessant, and the reasons he gives us, when he does give any, remain vague and unconvincing. One might say he was uncertain of his future from day to day. When he was not forced to fly by the police, one might well imagine that he would wait if circumstances were favourable. Yet suddenly he went off on long journeys, abandoning this love-making that he had begun, the society he had cultivated, or the business at his hand.

It is at this time of his life that money counted little to him. He spent much with little result, contrary to his former habit. He travelled gloriously, was splendidly dressed. He gave magnificent dinners and imitated the richest lords. Without doubt he had made much money in Paris and Holland, but he had also engaged in hazardous enterprises which might have bled him white. Doubtless, he played high, and knew how to take no risks; but yet one always loses sums more or less considerable at the green table. Doubtless, also, he was largely subsidized by Madame d'Urfé (and some others), but on the other hand, he allowed himself to be robbed by Costa, his valet, and his own resources, abundant though they might be, were nothing like enough to support his luxury state and prodigality. Moreover, it seems certain that these resources did not come entirely from his own financial skill, great and daring though this might be.

Before 1760 he narrates openly his connection with Freemasonry. He speaks of his initiation at Lyons, of his becoming Master at Paris, of inter-Masonic confidences between himself and Lord

Murray at Venice, of his flattering reception by the lodges in Holland. After 1760 he never mentions it again.* That does not say there was nothing more to be said on the subject. If he was so high in the Masonic hierarchy, his silence may have been intentional. It means an indirect proof of more or less important missions which he was entrusted with, of which the narration, even if late in the day, would have cost him dear.

It appears, then, probable that the Adventurer played an active and well-paid rôle in the propagation of Freemasonry in Europe, and that he showed in it much zeal and initiative. But he was one of those whose assiduity was not lasting. He gave himself up to a new enterprise, but when his success was gained, neglected to discover its reasons. Probably, his passionate nature also was in his way, and made him commit indiscretions. Under the influence of his passions this clever man sometimes showed himself singularly tactless. Besides, he was a boaster and a braggart. Those in high places may have feared both his quickness and his indiscretions. Can we doubt that he would not use for luxury and gambling the sums entrusted to him, and that as his credit diminished his allowances did so too? He would have fallen into abject poverty had he not met with a charitable nobleman, who very likely was himself a Mason, from whom he was only too happy to accept an offer of hospitality. All this is only hypothesis. It seems, however, to stand out clearly enough in the *Mémoires* between the lines. It would explain some incomprehensible passages,

* He mentions being a Mason, however, Vol. VII. (Garnier), 158-9 (Translator's note).

and fills up some mysterious gaps. It falls in perfectly with the character of Casanova, and with the morals of the time. We certainly would like to have more positive proofs, but the existence of these proofs is so probable that in spite of the difficulty of finding them, we do not despair some day of doing so.

If Casanova had had a more serious brain, and a better ordered mind, he might have left a record of his peregrinations equal to the *Voyage en Italie* of Lalande. If he had enjoyed the same sunny nature and epicurean habit of mind, like President de Broses, he could have written of the four corners of Europe in half a century of "*Lettres familières*," full of delightful humour and quaint conceits. If he had been really a critic of social order he could have, like Young, left us records more precise, if not more alive, on the state of the kingdoms and empires of Europe in the eighteenth century. Casanova, however, disdained everything that was outside his personality. He reveals himself, especially subjectively, whether he was on a journey in his carriage, tossed about by a storm in a bad ferry-boat, slept in a poor inn, or was received in a palace. It is always through the feelings of his desires and passions that brings his surroundings to us. He may make love in an open box, victimize Madame d'Urfé, or talk about finance with the Jew Boaz. The universe was to him created for no other purpose than to serve his ends and to contain his vagaries. So the rooks and crows filled the Gothic cathedrals with their cawing ; having no doubt that the beams of these cathedrals were placed there for them to perch on and the carvings made for their shelter.

In every country, in cities and towns, in the midst of most varied scenes and peoples, he was occupied only with his own satisfaction. He journeyed, in his perpetual vagabondage, sometimes through interest, prudence, and ambition, but in every circumstance he never let slip an opportunity for pleasure. Escaping frequently from prison, police, or the chance of worse, he condemned himself to his carriage and post-horses for many years. It carried him to many joys and much debauch. Always uncertain of the future, he enjoyed the present day with fever and vehemence. His life was an uninterrupted pursuit of pleasure. This was its true end. And, at last, when shut up in the Castle of Waldstein, through poverty and old age, he saw it all again, while writing the long manuscript of his *Mémoires*, these jolly years of happy wanderings, and he again, in imagination, went from city to city and country to country, in a fantasy evoked in his turbulent soul by his extravagant and curious destiny.

CONCLUSION

REMARKABLE in cynicism, surprising in mystification, incomparable in benefiting by the ideas of others, benefiting by their work, using their hospitality, and making love to their wives, Casanova lived his whole life as a parasite on his fellow creatures. The latter, however, by way of compensation, had to content themselves with admiring his handsome figure, to listen to his tirades, to see him go off in his carriage, and finally to see how many crowns they had lost through him. He produced nothing fruitful or even profitable. His natural genius was employed only in intrigue and his ambition in gaining a living from others. He had worked hard to gain little. From the social point of view his life was sterile and his end negative. He used for his own purposes the decadence of his century, the powerlessness of the laws, the relaxation of morals, and the foolish indulgence of his contemporaries to envelop themselves in carelessness and in pleasure. Preying without ceasing on a crumbling Society, he extracted the necessary materials for his luxury, his independence and his amusement. A fisher in troubled waters, he was also a pillager of those wrecked, a sponger, parasite, *Chevalier d'Industrie*, and the Prince of Adventurers.

Alas for him, it was his only idea of enjoying

life. He wished to shine and live as he liked. His accurate weighing of realities had shown him the impossibility of remaining in the ordinary rut without resigning himself to mediocrity and dullness. Yet his philosophy taught him that during man's brief career below it is useless to aim too high or to inflict on oneself too many privations. Thus he left to more ordinary minds a life of regularity and uniformity. To himself he reserved the unexpected, the joy of a life perhaps reprehensible but certainly pleasant. It was so much the worse for the ordinary mortal if, by his silliness or simplicity, he allowed Casanova to profit by him.

What interests had he, moreover, in the others? They did not even know what they wished. In the universal chaos, how could one even find an ideal equally profitable for everybody? Some would benefit and others suffer. How were the lower people to accomplish a change really beneficial to them? What had great legislators, the natural leaders of people, achieved? What had become of the work of heroes, sages, or saints? Their glory, virtue, good influence had been lost in the shadows of crime, ruin, and hypocrisy. What good were vast projects and sublime ideals when man was tied down by an inexorable destiny from which it was impossible to escape?

Where the great and tried had failed, what could a Casanova hope for? In his poor sphere of action, how could he help his equals? Without influence, misunderstood or unknown, he, like so many others, would be dead, stifled by the indifference, opposition, or dislike of his fellow-beings. It was much better to think of himself alone. The delight of

timing everything to his own profit and pleasure was clearly felt by the Adventurer. He thought the desire of being good, and devoting himself to that end, was his worst self-deception, when it led to nothing but disorders and evils. So, rightly or wrongly, our hero acted like *Candide*, "he cultivated his own garden." He cultivated his own garden, not with a gardener's forethought, or the constant attention of an amateur, but with the gracefulness of a poet. He did not plant his garden with productive beds, with rare flowers or scented shrubs: he allowed to grow in the most luxurious manner the trees, the bushes, and the flowers in the way they liked, and contented himself with enjoying the results in the easy way that best suited his pleasure, his enjoyment, and his voluptuous taste. And this it is, paradoxical and remarkable though it may be, that his contemporaries, both men and women, though held up to ridicule and exploited to such a degree, came in crowds to taste of the delights, and without shame, enjoy themselves in this garden of enchantment.

And we, though so different, and so much more barbarous, we also find a great pleasure in penetrating also, in spite of the bitter and wild flowers we meet with therein, into the garden, extensive and curious and a little mysterious, which *Casanova* laid out: we laugh at some fantastic memory of his follies, but we become stupefied in reading the depth of *Casanova's* soul, and discover, as we do so, in spite of the time that has passed, the unexpected phases of his disconcerting and real personality. The eternal outpouring of the thoughts of the man.

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